EUPHRENIA

OR THE TEST OF LOVE

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EUPHRENIA

OF

THE TEST OF LOVE

EUPHRENIA

OR

The Test of Love

A POEM

BY

WILLIAM SHARP

(FIONA MACLEOD.pseud.)

στάζει δ' ἔν θ' ὕπνῳ πρὸ καρδίας
μνησιπήμων πόνος, καὶ παρ' ἄκοντας ἦλθε σωφρονεῖν,
δαιμόνων δέ που χάρις,
βιαίως σέλμα σεμνὸν ἡμένων.

ÆSCH., *Ag.*, 172.

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1884

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PREFACE.

THE poem now offered to the Public was begun as long ago as 1850, and completed about 1856. It underwent various revisions during the next few years, and then remained unaltered. The author had not given up the intention of publication; but a variety of causes, especially his extreme modesty, induced him to put off that step from time to time until his death in 1883, and it is now left to his son to usher the work into the world.

It is presented exactly as it was left, as the editor feels that he has neither the capacity nor the right to make any alteration.

It would be presumption for him to say more, and with these few words he commends the work to the favour of the critics and the public.

14, MOUNT STREET, GROSVENOR SQUARE,
October, 1884.

CANTO FIRST.

THE LOVERS.

ARGUMENT.

The lovers—The trysting place—The first cloud—Contrition—Reflections suggested by the storm—The library—The "still small voice"—The consolations of "the Book"—Sleep—The maiden's altered views—Her fears—The influence of prayer—The maiden's chamber—The sleeping girl—Midnight in the library—The council of the Spirits of the Books—The subject of debate.—The argument—The speeches of the Spirits of Episcopacy—Infidelity and Satire—The sentence of the Spirit of Law—The Spirits of the Night employed in their vocations.

CANTO FIRST.

THE LOVERS.

I.

THE time, eve's pensive, soul-felt hour;
The season, balmy May;
No sound disturbed the stillness of
The gently fading day;
Around was spread a varied scene,
That harmonized full well—
The verdant wood, the winding stream,
Green hill, and mossy dell—
A landscape that is sought in vain,
Though fairer realms there be,
Except within thy "sea-girt isle,"
My own, my dear Countrie.

II.

Clad in a robe of golden hue,
The sun had sunk to rest,
Some traces of his glorious course
Still lingered in the West;
Above the river's glassy face
Light wreaths of vapour lay
(The incense offered by the stream
To the bright God of day);
The air's transparent brilliancy
Permits the eye to trace
The outline of the distant hills,
No longer lost in space.

III.

Beneath the shadow of the wood
Two forms are faintly seen;
A nearer view proclaims the one
A youth of noble mien;
And standing by him is a maid,
Whose face and form might vie
With any traced by limner's hand,
Or sung by minstrelsie:
The encircled waist, the resting head
The hour, the spot declare
That these are votaries of love,
That seek a refuge there.

IV.

Yet something doth betoken
A difference of degree;
The pride of birth breaks forth in him,
More lowly far is she;
His name, with sound familiar,
Falls on the list'ner's ear;
While hers is as an unknown word
Beyond her hamlet's sphere;
His father is a belted Earl;
Hers but a yeoman true;
Too oft assortment such as this
Doth make a maiden rue.

V.

'Twere long to tell how first they met;
Some timely service shown
Had forced the maid, scarce consciously,
Her gratitude to own;
That springe, oft set for woman's love,
Doth seldom miss its prey;
From gratitude to love there lies
A broad and beaten way;
And, as the mutual flame gained strength,
More frequently they met,
Till meeting formed their only joy,
Parting their sole regret.

VI.

Those happy evening meetings!
How long appeared the day;
The sun was hateful to their eyes,
Save when his parting ray
With mellow light the landscape tinged
And deeper grew the shade,
Till twilight's veil enabled them,
Unseen, to seek the glade,
Their right-well-chosen trysting place;
Oaks stood like sentries round;
Well might the legend favour find
That called it "fairy ground";
Or it had been in other days
A Druid's sacred grot,
And superstition still attached
Her mystery to the spot.

VII.

Oft in her course the conscious moon
Was witness to their vows,
Darting her prying beams aslant
The friendly shelt'ring boughs;
Or, at her zenith height arrived,
The traitorous orb revealed
The glow of happiness and love
The maid would have concealed,

But that her gentle trusting heart
No longer owned control,
So thoroughly, so cunningly,
Had love usurped the whole.
Here, 'neath the trembling foliage,
Their faltering tongues confessed
The ever-changing hopes and fears
That fill a lover's breast.

VIII.

Here too they parted, sad and loath,
Until the morrow's night
With the loved object once again
Should bless their raptured sight.
How changed the scene! the murm'ring breeze
Seemed sadly to complain;
The dewy ev'ning wept as if
It shared their mutual pain;
The lengthened kiss, the pressure fond,
The oft repeated word,
Proved that the measured hints of time
No longer were unheard;
And, after parting, yet again
They turned with eager pace,
As if by some attraction drawn
To join in close embrace.

IX.

Now, sigh to sigh re-echoing,
Reluctantly they part;
While every falling footstep strikes
A knell to either heart;
Each returns home stealthily,
And seeks, unseen, to gain
Their chamber's silence, and indulge
In memory's pleasing pain:
Again live o'er that stolen hour,
Each look, each accent weigh;
And gild the ideal future
With hope's illusive ray.

X.

Ah! happy time, ah! heaven on earth!
Why should experience tear
The graceful veil through which the world
Assumed a shape so fair?
Why not in happy ignorance
Let us be cheated still?
Thou worst of pedants, who wouldst make
Of every joy an ill!
By thy harsh hateful lesson,
Alas! we only gain
The fatal knowledge that the world
Is hollow, false, and vain.

XI.

Thus oftentimes these lovers met,
In innocence complete;
The maiden's guileless heart knew naught
Of caution or deceit;
Her gentle eyes are raised to his,
And all her actions prove
The unsuspecting confidence
That marks a virgin's love:
Nor ever had his answ'ring glance
Compelled her to look down;
His eyes spoke only sentiments
Responsive to her own.

XII.

Until a sultry evening,
That closed a sultry day;
The sun sank red and threatening;
All lurid was his ray;
The blushing clouds reflected back
His angry parting beams;
The coppery mass, with livid spots,
Some conflagration seems;
The large raindrops, the wind's low moan,
The air o'ercharged and warm,
Are heralds unmistakable,
That speak the coming storm.

XIII.

Why do the maiden's downcast eyes
So often seek the ground?
Why gazes she so hurriedly
And anxiously around?
Why should she seek her home to-night
At this unwonted hour?
She dreads, perchance, the gathering clouds
That round her darkly lour;
Or do his heightened colour
And brightly flashing eye
Inspire her with a vague alarm,
Albeit she knows not why?

XIV.

His arm, whose twining, fond support
She almost woo'd till now,
Seems to imprison her slight form
Too closely to allow
The action of her beating heart;
His voice, whose lightest word,
In her unfathomed depth of soul,
Some gushing well-spring stirred,
Has lost those tones harmonious,
No longer low and clear,
Its harsh and altered character
Awake instinctive fear.

XV.

A prey to doubts, till now unknown,
The maiden marked the change ;
Which, to her gentle nature, showed
Mysteriously strange ;
She tried by soft caresses to
Recall his usual mood ;
But only added fuel to
The fever of his blood ;
Till, frightened at his vehemence,
She homeward bent her way,
Nor could his oft-repeated prayer
Prevail on her to stay.

XVI.

He sought forgiveness humbly,
His wild and eager air
Was changed to sigh and sorrow,
To entreaty and despair ;
The lightnings of his eyes no more
Brought blushes to her brow ;
The tongue, erewhile so eloquent,
Where was its witchery now ?
That too persuasive mute appeal
Her heart could not repel ;
He sealed his pardon on her lips,
Ere he would say farewell.

XVII.

They parted, yes, they parted ;
Alas ! not as they met ;
Love's sunshine had been darken'd by
The shadow of regret ;
And Hope and Fear, alternately,
With all their powers try,
Within their battle-field, the heart,
To gain the mastery ;
Till, wearied with the doubtful strife,
The rivals quit the plain,
And calm reflection takes the place
Vacated by the twain.

XVIII.

He seeks the ancestral mansion,
But in his speaking face
The stamp of feelings uncontrolled
Has left its searing trace ;
The lips compressed, the frowning brow,
The eyes all downward bent,
Betray the man who has been galled,
And foiled in his intent ;
While the flushed cheek, the heaving chest,
The low convulsive sigh,
Show that, within his inmost heart,
Passion doth lurking lie.

XIX.

His bosom's ruder feelings calmed,
The drooping eyelids prove
The presence of those soft alarms,
Which haunt the course of love!
The loss of that pure virgin heart,
The dread of her disdain,
Strike, like the sudden thought of death,
Across his reeling brain;
He finds, too late, that he who 'lists
Beneath Love's banner may
Receive the wound he would inflict,
Nor quit unscathed the fray.

XX.

Thus long in musing mood he stood,
And watched the threatened storm,
Its fitful violence awoke
The soul's undying worm;
The lightning's fierce and livid flash,
So short and yet so bright,
Which rendered blacker tenfold
The darkness of the night,
Suggested to his conscious heart
Unbridled passion's joy
Blazing in lawless wantonness,
To wither and destroy.

XXI.

The answering burst of thunder
That followed in its train,
Arousing, with electric peal,
Alike earth, air, and main;
The fitful gust, the moaning cry,
The shrieking of the wind,
The angry lashing of the rain,
Presented to his mind,
The exulting shout of vengeance,
The victim's wild complaint,
Earth's universal hatred,
Let loose without restraint.

XXII.

Awed by the elemental strife,
Nor able to control
The current of reproachful thought
That sweeps across his soul,
He seeks a book, but o'er the page
His glances idly stray,
No interest, nor meaning do
The characters convey;
In the sealed volume of his heart,
He reads, with fear intense,
The wiles which Guilt would fain array
'Gainst helpless Innocence.

XXIII.

Could storied page or poet's lay
Have soothed the youth's unrest;
Could subtle reason's power have quelled
The tumult of his breast;
Could science have delighted,
Or eloquence have charmed,
History have raised an interest,
Or patriotism warmed;
Each in that chamber had its place;
It was the owner's care
To add to the collected store
All that was good or rare.

XXIV.

Ranged, in due order, on the shelves,
Up from the floor beneath,
Lay all that human intellect
Has power to bequeath;
The old and ponderous volumes,
Which formed the lower tier,
A pyramid of lighter works
Seemed, atlas-like, to bear;
E'en as the sages of the past
Have never ceased to be
At once a prop and stepping stone
To their posterity.

XXV.

A solitary lamp relieved
The centre of the room,
Giving the scarce distinguished walls
A character of gloom ;
While, here and there, the time-dy'd oak
Reveal'd some figure grim,
Which seem'd unto the youth to scowl
Malignantly on him :
Others grinned hideous welcome ;
And one, with leering eye,
Seemed conscious of his inmost thoughts,
By sin's freemasonry.

XXVI.

He rose and paced the noble room,
Expecting, but in vain,
By exercise to chase away
These phantoms of the brain ;
But every footfall conjured up
A dull and hollow sound ;
He felt like one who walks, by night,
Within a charnel ground ;
And when he uttered words aloud,
To banish such weak fears,
A thousand echoes, mockingly,
Resounded in his ears.

XXVII.

At length his mind's complexion
Assumed a healthier tone;
His eyes, with hardier, prouder glance,
Around the room were thrown;
Again he sought a book's relief,
And, 'neath his hand, he found
That "Sacred Volume" on which faith
Its only hope doth ground;
He opened it; each word divine
Said to his soul "be still":
He felt it was a talisman
To shield him from all ill.

XXVIII.

He thought of her who, formerly,
With all a mother's joy,
Had tried untiringly to teach
Its lessons to her boy:
Might not that guide, though taken hence,
Her earthly labour done,
From the bright mansions of the blessed
Look down upon her son?
His heart o'erflowed, and welcome tears,
Falling as dews from heaven,
Cooled the strong fever of the mind,
Too full of earthly leaven.

XXIX.

The recollection of the days when,
Free from passion's thrall,
He passed his childhood's happy years—
The happiest of all—
Soothed him, and o'er his spirit threw
A mild and holy calm;
Lost in the mazes of the past,
The present ceased to charm;
Till he confounds, insensibly,
The present with the past,
As nature, o'er his tired soul,
Sleep's grateful mantle cast.

XXX.

And she, the gentle, loving one,
When by her instinct taught
To fly from him who hitherto
Had owned her every thought—
Her home she entered silently,
And, shunning question, fled;
In the wild tumult of her soul,
Scarce hearing what was said:
Once in her chamber's refuge hid,
She proved the sad relief
Which tears, unchecked and unobserved,
Afford to woman's grief.

XXXI.

All to her view seemed sadly changed,
Yet why she could not tell ;
She felt like one who suffers 'neath
The influence of a spell ;
She tried to think, before the attempt
Her very senses reeled ;
She saw the danger unto which
Till now her eyes were sealed ;
No more the sunny prospect smiled,
Her vision of the morn ;
But, in its place, a gloomy gulf
Seemed bottomless to yawn.

XXXII.

More calm, at length she checked her tears,
And felt, with rising sigh,
The want of a fond mother's heart,
On which she might rely ;
That Altar which received her griefs
In childhood's peaceful days,
When sorrow's dew was quickly dried
By joy's absorbing rays :
Till now she never truly felt
The value of that friend
On whom alone, in doubt and fear,
A daughter can depend.

XXXIII.

Many a circumstance, till now
Buried in memory's store,
Before her mental vision rose
As vivid as of yore ;
Those words of caution and advice,
Which seemed so needless then,
Struck like an echo from the tomb,
And mutely spoke again ;
Could that mild voice advise her now,
Banish her doubts and fears !
Useless, alas ! her vain regrets,
Futile her bitter tears.

XXXIV.

Sudden upon her startled ear
The pealing thunder broke ;
Its warning tones within her soul
A host of terrors woke ;
In the fantastic lightning's play
She traced a giant form,
Who, throned on clouds of darkness, rode,
The demon of the storm ;
Or shuddered, as a brilliant flash
Seemed, serpent-like, to dart
Full on the mansion which enshrined
The treasure of her heart.

XXXV.

No longer mistress of her fears,
She sought relief in prayer.
Her hands pressed on her aching eyes
Shut out the lightning's glare;
She prayed for pardon; prompted by
The monitor within,
She now, for the first time, perceived
Her secret was a sin;
Yet he had asked for secrecy,
And her soft nature knew
No words to wound the heart of one
So noble and so true.

XXXVI.

Calmed by her pious exercise,
Her virgin couch she sought,
But sleep was powerless 'gainst a mind
So occupied by thought;
She tried to think of earlier scenes;
Alas! the attempt was vain;
The sterile past served but to bring
The present back again;
She could not school her memory,
Nor banish from its seat
The thought of him who first had taught
Her maiden heart to beat.

XXXVII.

Nature's great boon at length prevailed,
The maiden sank to rest;
Kind sleep, with pitying finger,
Her throbbing eyelids pressed:
The phantoms of the night retired
As soon as rising day—
Smiling upon the sleeping girl
With soft and rosy ray—
Revealed the scene around her,
And slowly brought to view
Her chamber's simple ornaments,
Albeit they were few.

XXXVIII.

The curtains sheltering her couch
Of virgin, spotless white,
Shaded a form as angel's pure,
A face as seraph's bright;
Her head thrown slightly backward,
And draperied by her hair,
Pressed on her pillow tenderly;
Her forehead smooth and fair;
The fringes of her close-veiled eyes
Swept her soft velvet cheek;
Her lips were gently parted,
As if about to speak;

A rising blush, a murmured word,
A soft, half sobbing sigh,
Proved sleep scarce equal to the task
Of conquering memory.

XXXIX.

One careless arm thrown round her head
Disclosed a neck of snow ;
The ripening beauties of her form
Swell'd gracefully below ;
The light and clinging covering
An outline helped to trace,
Suggestive, in its harmony,
Of modesty and grace ;
All spoke of purity and peace ;
The quiet of the hour,
The fragrant breath of morning,
The perfume of the flower,
Which, round her lattice twining close,
Seemed jealous that the day
Should dare to throw his searching eyes
Where its loved mistress lay.

XL.

Quit we the chamber noiselessly,
With blessings on that brow,
And to the sleeping youth return,
And suffer time to show

The issue of the encounter ;
For conflict must there be,
Where Love would try conclusions
With Pride, his enemy ;
Love rears the airy fabric high,
Love sanctifies the place ;
But, like a secret enemy,
Pride undermines the base.

XLI.

The youth slept on, and all was still,
Except the flickering light
By the expiring lamp sent forth,
Then all was solemn night.
Silence and darkness jointly reigned,
Until the midnight chime,
Borne on the fitful gust, proclaimed
The ceaseless march of Time ;
Told that another day was gone,
Another morrow come,
Another step in man's career
Of progress to the tomb.

XLII.

The last chime past, the chamber's gloom
Was suddenly dispelled ;
The crowded shelves, which until now
Had inert volumes held,

Were peopled, and each single work
Its proper guardian owned ;
Naught could be seen, where books had been,
But shadowy forms enthroned,
Their eyes of flame shed o'er the place
A wild, unearthly light,
Revealing evanescent shades
Unknown to mortal sight.

XLIII.

The sages of antiquity—
The giants of the past,
Around the peopled chamber
Their curious glances cast ;
With look profound, and eagle eye,
They scanned the lettered throng ;
Or smiled approvingly upon
The nobler sons of song ;
Or changed a mute intelligence
With him the first to trace
The unerring laws of nature,
And pierce the realms of space.

XLIV.

There might be seen the ascetic monk,
With fast and vigil worn,
Whose sallow, sickly cheek matched well
The parchment soiled and torn ;

Here the more modern churchman,
Who, with a ruddier hue,
Reflects his gorgeous binding
In colours no less true:
A new arrival looks askant,
Supposing he must be
"The observed of all observers"
In this society.

XLV.

The Catholic, the Protestant,
Rome, and the rebel crew,
And that late innovation,
The compound of the two,
Are strangely mixed, while unbelief,
With cold and withering sneer,
Seems half suspicious of the host
Of Orthodoxy near;
Though, in their want of unity,
He fancies he may find
Some converts, who, to views extreme,
Are not at all inclined.

XLVI.

Naught breaks the silence of the night;
Each spirit seems to wait
Some warning signal, which shall serve
To open the debate;

Their flashing eyes all turn on one
Who differs from the rest,
Love, Might, Dominion, Majesty,
Are all in him expressed;
As, in the centre of the room,
With mild and thoughtful look,
Watching the sleeping youth, appears
The Spirit of "the Book."

XLVII.

He spoke, and music's sweetest tones
Are harsh, beyond compare,
To the celestial harmony
That floated in the air;
His voice in gentlest accents fell
In words of simplest guise;
Soft pity seemed to hold her throne
Within his beaming eyes,
As o'er the unconscious slumberer
He stretched his sheltering arm;
Each spirit owned, in silent awe,
The influence of the charm.

THE SPIRIT OF "THE BOOK."

"Sleep, Son of Earth, who, in thy thoughtless age,
Hast sought for consolation in my page.
May its great lessons be on thee impressed;
May they have taken root within thy breast—

There wilt thou learn that in this world below
Man should assuage, and not increase, the woe
Which falls to mortal lot; Ah! happiest he
Who to each dispensation bows the knee;
In trial draws fresh comfort from on high,
Knowing that man must suffer ere he die;
Till, weaned by trouble from all earthly things,
He mounts to Heaven on Faith's upsoaring wings.
Sleep overtook thee lapped in Fancy's arms;
May'st thou awake to wisdom's purer charms;
E'en from thy youth (thanks to an angel gone;
To her may'st thou still prove a worthy son)
Thou hast been wont to seek for counsel here;
In thy ripe life may its full fruit appear:
May duty's laws a tenfold force acquire;
May each command a higher awe inspire;
May the instructions which those lips let fall
Be thy best guide, thy rule, thy all in all.
From sharp temptation mayst thou still be free:
Or strong, if tempted: gifted mayst thou be
With sense to feel the littleness of pride;
And, not too soon, thy sainted mother died.
Sad would it be to deem such efforts vain
To guide a son athwart life's thorny plain;
Say, spirits, nurtured thus, will this youth be
A limb of Satan or a child to me?"

THE SPIRIT OF INFIDELITY.

"A child of thine!" replied, with mocking laugh,
The spirit of the Infidel; "why, half
His soul is forfeit now; a child of thine!
Why, surely you forget his lordly line;
His ancestry—their place in history's page;
His father's pride, his wealth, his heritage;
What! shall the heir apparent of an Earl
Stoop to a marriage with a peasant girl?
Shall the bright blazon of eight hundred years
Be dimmed to save a yeoman's daughter's tears?
Though, sooth to say, if honest, fair descent
From sire to son in line direct were meant,
The yeoman has the peer upon the hip,
And might be hard on many a noble slip;
And all because this well-begotten youth
Has sipped the waters of the well of Truth;
Was, by his mother, taught to lisp his prayers,
And still preserves this trick of childish years;
No! I'm a sceptic in some things, 'tis true,
But, knowing the race, I almost doubt that you
Believe this possible. What! brave the sneer
Of all his tribe, e'en of some mushroom peer,
Who, gorged with city gains, aspires to be
A graft of England's old nobility.

Or failing this (the thing has oft been done),
The upstart fool may buy a lordly son;
Regild some bankrupt title, and essay
To infuse wealth's sap through drained nobility:
Why care for any failings in the man,
Though spendthrift, blackleg, rake, or fool, he can
Boast of his daughter's rank, and fairly, too;
For, having bought the title, 'tis his due:
And though, poor girl, she find, but all too late,
That happiness depends not upon state;
Or droop to earth, like some transplanted flower,
A victim to the largeness of her dower,
So she but leave a scion of the line,
Her sire content bows to the 'will divine';
Comforts himself with consolation trite;
Gravely remarks 'whatever is is right';
Marks the long train of carriages file by
(Their emptiness the type of sympathy),
While the proud marble, doomed her dust to hide,
Perpetuates his folly and his pride.
Pshaw! I turn chatterer, and all to prove
That pride and birth are enemies to love;
But when yon youth weds with a lowly bride,
I shall believe in all I have denied."

XLVIII.

He ceased with shrill and mocking laugh,
And triumph in his eye,
As round the room he boldly looked
For one who should reply ;
The Spirit of "the Book" remained,
But deigned no further word,
Though, from his steadfast, meaning look,
Contempt might be inferred ;
The Church's servants, as was fit,
Their sacred armour don,
And only differ as to who
Shall lead their forces on.

XLIX.

Each spirit with humility
Yields to his abler friend ;
Each fears he may not worthily
The sacred cause defend ;
The Papist to the Lutheran
Politely gives the "pas,"
Alleging that the modern church
Is better read by far ;
Till, one by one, they cease to speak,
And there remain but two ;
One of whom shortly bows, and says,
"My Lord ! I yield to you."

L.

Forth from his place, with unctuous grace,
A prelate's spirit stepped
(Where in this world of flesh and blood
Have Bishop's spirits crept?
Their functions so restricted are,
Their acts so doubtful seem,
Their revenues their only care,
Some wicked scorners deem).
With look that claimed attention,
A slight pause for effect,
He thus addressed the Infidel
And all his carping sect.

THE SPIRIT OF EPISCOPACY.

"Excuse me, my dear brethren,
I really cannot hear,
Without replying to them,
These strictures on a 'peer';
The more so when I recollect
That the race does not boast
Its share of representatives
In Literature's host;
But, granting that in this one field
Their talent does not shine,
Yet wisdom takes another form
In the ennobled line.

True there are bright exceptions
To this exclusion wide;
But they, I fear, are more inclined
To take the other side;
Nor indeed, were it otherwise,
Would they exactly be
Fit champions or fair judges
In this controversy:
Therefore, as a Lord Spiritual,
Permit me to defend
The Peerage from the onslaught
Indulged in by our friend.
Dismiss, I would entreat you all,
Suspicion from your minds,
That undue partiality
My sense of justice blinds.
My latter days were passed, 'tis true,
Amongst the titled race;
But tutor, curate, pamphleteer,
Were steps to my high place;
And I may be presumed to have
The feelings of a man
Who has been poor, and then has soared
As high as Churchman can.
I protest against the doctrine,
That by the nobly born
The feelings of humanity
Are held in utter scorn;

That pride of birth can influence
The nature of the man;
That feel as other mortals do,
No noble ever can.
These false assertions I deny!
Nay, more, I trust to show.
That all the glory of this isle
We to the Peerage owe.
On foreign nations cast an eye,
Or listen to the tales
Of our gay friend 'the daily press,'
Who, certes, never fails
To show us how affairs go on
Throughout this planet's span:
Most other countries, more or less,
Show man opposed to man.
Take France, which for some evenings past
Has been our nightly theme,
How startling the accounts we hear,
How wild, how like a dream!
Yet our friend piles up proof on proof,
And I am free to own,
That, as a mirror of the age,
The British press alone
Reflects correctly the world's pranks.
In my time it was not
So unassailable as now,
So free from the foul blot

Of truckling to the 'powers that be.'
Take France, where I maintain
All would be peace and harmony,
But that the social chain
Has lost its strongest, noblest link,
The shackle which connects
All interests in a common bond,
And reconciles all sects.
A throne by peers surrounded,
Shows like some temple fair,
Its nice proportions standing out
Against the ambient air:
Approach it nearer, 'twill be found
That all the weight is borne
By graceful columns, which sustain,
No less than they adorn.
Destroy these pillars, and the dome,
Which lately touched the skies,
Falls headlong from its airy height,
Never again to rise.
If then the peerage, as a race,
Serves to uphold the fane,
'Twere madness to destroy a prop
We ne'er can raise again.
But I, from ancient habit,
To politics have given
More time than I intended;
A touch of the old leaven

Clings to us all! and my design
At present is to show
That peers pass through some trials
Which others never know.
E'en from the cradle are they not
Assailed on every hand
By flattery, whose silver tongue
Few mortals can withstand?
Grown older, their temptations
Are harder to be borne;
Should flattery fail the tempter,
Sly ridicule and scorn
Finish the work, and in the end,
All trace of good destroy,
The victim old in sin's career,
Although in years a boy:
Until, the reign of folly past,
Reason assumes her sway;
Pleasure to sterner duty yields;
Conviction tears away
The veil which hid reality.
The being who but now
Rushed blindly on in pleasure's train,
Impelled by passion's glow,
Assumes the post of duty,
Stops in his wild career,
Emerges from his fallen state
A Patriot and a Peer!

Who, in the realm of England,
Is foremost in the van,
When charity's soft, plaintive voice
Pleads for his fellow man?
Who, but some noble of the land?
Nor do his efforts end
With a mere gift; in other ways
He proves himself a friend,—
Descends from his high station,
Adds voice to heart and hand,
A martyr to his duty's call
At charity's command.
Who aids the worn and struggling man
To run his race anew,
In climes where hope's bright rainbow,
With tints of rosy hue,
Gladdens the exile's prospect,
And shows him, that though here,
He may have quaffed of sorrow's cup
In his long dull career;
That happiness is possible;
That there is yet a goal;
A path wherein to run his race;
A purpose for his soul?
The arts, without their fostering care,
Would languish and decay;
Science stop short in her career,
All taste would melt away;

The poet and the painter,
Lacking a patron's smile,
Would heap their choicest treasures up
To form a funeral pile ;
While music, lending her last notes,
To mourn her sisters fair,
Would headlong rush into the flames,
A victim to despair.
And when, for a short space released
From senatorial cares,
He, with his humbler tenants,
His well-earned leisure shares ;
Shows agriculture's richest spoils ;
His beasts of choicest sort ;
The secret of success imparts ;
Or, in his turn, is taught ;
Proud to be termed the 'Farmer's Friend' ;
In his ancestral hall,
The simple country gentleman,
Beloved, revered by all.
I could say more in their behalf ;
I trust that I have shown
Their errors are Society's,
Their virtues all their own.
Excuse this long defence ;
My sense of truth and right
Has made me trespass on you
At such a length to-night."

LI.

But short the silence which prevailed,
When, as by one consent,
A thousand voices chorussed
A shout of non-content;
A thousand mocking gibes were heard,
But, above all the din,
A loud and pompous voice exclaimed—
"My lord, it were a sin,
A grovelling fault, an infamy,
In me to sit and hear
That, as an author, I have been
Indebted to a peer
For patronage. Did I not stand
Amidst a motley crew
Of lacqueys and of sycophants
Unnoticed? It is true
That when my work was known
Amongst the truly great,
The peer, amongst whose minions
I had been forced to wait,
Drawled out his hackneyed compliment;
But he who is inclined
To be considered learning's friend,
Must be the first to find
The merits of an author's work,
Must take him by the hand,

Do battle with detraction,
And Envy's host withstand.
Let others answer for themselves,
Experience bids me say,
That patrons wait upon success,
But seldom lead the way."

LII.

Hereon a pale and earnest sprite
From a dark nook leaped forth;
The spirits' perfect silence proved
Their knowledge of his worth.
Or it may be that no one cared
To venture within reach
Of one who rather trespassed on
The courtesies of speech.
He looked around, but as his glance
No rival could detect,
He to the courtly prelate spoke
Something to this effect.

SPIRIT OF SATIRE.

"An author's troubles end with his success,
The constant soul can soar above distress;
But slights and scorn let those forget who will,
I felt them once, nay, more, they rankle still.
Heaven protect me from my friends, say I,
And let me wrestle with mine enemy.

I with your lordship heartily agree
In all you've said of young nobility,
Though I much doubt if lordly virtue's praise
Had so inspired you in your curate days;
Or if, as tutor, your admiring eyes
Followed some lordling lout's absurdities.
Forget the bench, be tutor yet once more,
Think of the petty insults which of yore
Your poverty provoked. Enter the gate
Where powdered minions of the 'lordly great'
Ape the insulting airs that are displayed
Before their dazzled sight, and, I'm afraid,
When your mind's eye, in retrospective scan,
Reviews the insults heaped upon the man,
You 'll blush to think that you have stooped to sound
The trump of praise upon such hollow ground.
You say that every charity affords
A list of names preceded by a lord's.
Oh, my dear Bishop, surely you intend
To laugh to scorn some charitable friend!
What lurking pride beneath a vain pretence;
What needless insult this to common sense;
My lord, kind soul, presides at weekly board;
Amazing condescension in a Lord!
So deem the vulgar; but he takes good care,
In patronage, to have the lion's share;
Contrives to find a matron who will deign
O'er fallen Magdalens to blandly reign.

Thrusts in some pampered menial, who could
Clear up some mystery little understood.
This, aye, and more than this; yet you pretend
A lord is charity's most earnest friend;
Cant, cant, my lord, pure cant, or, what is worse,
A mean device to save his lordship's purse.
Many a man who'd almost skin a flint,
Will spare a guinea to appear in print;
And he who first made public the long roll
Of patrons' names, be sure was not a fool.
Why hide the candle 'neath a bushel's shade?
Thus pride and charity each other aid:
Good springs from evil; and a noxious root
Yields, in the end, a good and wholesome fruit.

I know no piece of trickery which surpasses
The sops you've thrown out to 'the dangerous classes';
You've kept the grain, and charitably sent
The chaff to those for whom the whole was meant.
Your emigration schemes might well be christened,
'A plan by which the poor rates may be lessened.'

Your 'Scripture readers' and your 'ragged schools'
Hoodwink the eyes of surface-scanning fools,
But not the victims of your pious cares.
At their right price they rate your paltry wares;
Dost think that 'Scripture readers' will suffice
To banish from its haunts deep-seated vice?
Sickness and sin, in one thing, are alike;
The leech's remedy must boldly strike

The root of all the evil; this once known,
Vice, like disease, perchance, may be o'erthrown.
Deem you the poor will waste respect or thanks
On some smug 'mister' raised from their own ranks,
Or bear the intrusion of a lynx-eyed spy,
Cloaked in the garb of hireling piety?
Never! though on his glib and oily tongue
A rector's, nay a bishop's accents, hung.
Useless with them is this well-meant deceit;
The 'priest' they'll honour, but they'll mob the cheat.
And though disease and ghastly fever lie
Straight in the channel of his ministry,
The priest who wishes to reclaim the poor
Must hold his path, though Death were at the door.
  Upon my word, my lord, on emigration
Your eloquence commands my admiration.
Truly the poor man's prospect is but small,
Bounded all ways by some huge 'union' wall;
And doubtless he is wise to cross the sea,
If, by so doing, he finds a remedy
'Gainst Poverty's hard grasp, or what is worse,
The fears attendant on an empty purse.
But recollect that all this pith and sinew
Is so much loss of the best stuff that's in you;
And I suspect the day is not far distant
When England's attitude must be resistent.
Britain will yet with tears of shame deplore
Her rich so rich, her poor so very poor!

When by some spurious Attila o'errun,
She learns the value of each sturdy son ;
In vain will she regret the hardy race
Who the lone terrors of the desert face,
Sooner than stoop to share the paltry dole,
Which feeds the body while it starves the soul.
England is viewed abroad with jaundiced eyes,
And little loved in her own colonies.

What peers with science have to do, I own,
In all humility, is to me unknown.
True Worcester's marquis gave the world a scheme,
Since brought to bear by others, upon steam.
But the exception only serves to show
That science is considered somewhat low.
Sculpture and painting will not wholly die,
E'en if neglected by nobility ;
Some 'cunning Isaac,' doubtless, will be found
Who, scouting all ideas of classic ground,
Will add to our collection, when he hears
How well a noble sold his pilfered wares ;
And, far from any fear of Painting's wane,
To me this fact is tolerably plain ;
Though the old masters bear away the prize,
And are, by judges, lauded to the skies,
The modern men may hope to have *their* turn
When future ages shall *their* merits learn.

Music's decline your lordship seems to dread ;
Music in England is already dead,

Dead of starvation, and her place supplied
With music by our neighbours duly tried ;
Then, with its artistes, opera, ballet, all,
Sent secondhand to charm our capital.

The ancestral hall, at which your lordship glances,
Is surely gleaned from some old world romances :
A dream of condescension well enough
For churchmen's arguments, but wretched stuff
In eyes of worldlings. Doubtless, now and then,
A lord does deign to herd with meaner men ;
Nay, e'en her ladyship can condescend
To drop her dignity and play the friend.
But when such great humility you find,
You may be sure that something lurks behind :
Perhaps a new election is at hand—
At such times peers are wonderfully bland,—
And my lord owes it to his name and station
To put his second son in nomination.
The family borough is, of course, the heir's,
To start in opposition no one dares ;
And, if the younger can achieve the county,
He may hope something from the Premier's bounty.
The 'commons house' sounds odd upon the ears
Crammed, as we know it is, with sucking peers.

* * * * * * *

Who calls peers proud ? Do they not always try
To enlist the rich untitled, who might vie

With them successfully? Are they not ever ready
To receive an heiress, or bestow 'my lady'?
A sort of moral whirlpool is the peerage,
A rich craft near it must beware her steerage;
At first, half drunk, she reels in outer eddies;
But, if well freighted, gradually steadies,
Narrows her circle—near and nearer draws,
And falls at length into the monster's jaws.
Who calls peers proud? Not I; for I have seen
These very nobles bow before a queen.
'Tis but their duty you will say; but I
Do not allude at all to Royalty.
I mean the *Queen of Spades*, whose charming manners
Drew England's chivalry beneath her banners;
And whose good man's successful speculation
Engaged the attention of the entire nation.
Now, my good lord, I beg you'll understand
Why I thus blame the magnates of the land.
Were all their follies kept in their own class,
Wise men might be content to let them pass;
But (here's the mischief) all the minor fools
Ape at a distance fashion's tinsel rules.
But shall the vices of the baser brood,
Scathless, escape the impartial censor's rod?
Amongst the class commercial we shall find
Those faults which most proclaim a *want* of mind.

Pride, avarice, and meanness are the sins
Hugged to their hearts, by London's citizens.
Had I the power, their statue of the duke
No longer should be clothed in city smoke;
But, on its site, a figure should appear
Much better suited to the atmosphere.
A civic group, or allegory witty;
Or better still, 'the Genius of the City,
Some well known Plutus, holding up on high
A giant purse, which would attract each eye.
Kneeling before him, bowed with awe and fear,
A group of Mammon's worshippers appear.
Behind him, scowling hideously, might stand
Hatred and venomed Malice, hand in hand:
Whilst Envy, with her eyes fixed on the purse,
In act to spring, should seem to mouth a curse.
Dead at his feet a fleshless beggar might,
By contrast, aid its towering opposite.
A group like this, methinks, would really be
Well worthy citizens' idolatry.
Their god, raised high, its worshippers might see;
To whom, in passing, they might bow the knee;
If lower still their eyes they chanced to turn,
Their deity's attendants they would learn:
Thus, on their mood dependent, bull and bear
Might read a sermon, or repeat a prayer.
This should be placed where 'men of business' pass,
The base of granite, and the figure brass.

The vices of the men of low estate
Ought to be charged upon the rich and great.
Virtue will scarcely flourish in the 'den'
Which forms the nightly refuge of poor men.
Outward associations, more or less,
Upon the mind a certain stamp impress.
A plant, deprived of wholesome light and air,
Droops to its mother earth in mute despair;
No modest bud bursts forth in beauty bright,
No dazzling flower charms the sense of sight;
Life struggles feebly on, till winter's breath
Ends its long agony by welcome death.
And what is virtue but a goodly plant,
Which cannot thrive in misery and want?
It must be planted in a generous earth;
Needs care and culture from its very birth;
As it grows up, it must be trained with care;
Or all precautions unavailing are:
The kindly dew, descending from above,
Moistening its root—the gentle ray of love,
Effulgent beaming, usher into day
A flower that knows no touch of time's decay.
Cowards! and hypocrites! how self-love prevailed
When ghastly pestilence your ranks assailed!
What schemes were started to relieve the poor!
Then those were generous who ne'er gave before.
'You breed diseases,' the physician cried,
'While air and light are to the poor denied;'

'Water!' Hygeia shrieks, but at the cry
Up springs the Hydra of monopoly.
'Close your foul Golgothas,' shouts common sense;
'Our fees!' exclaim the clergy in defence.
Thus year succeeds to year, meanwhile the poor
Are left—exactly where they were before.
Oh, England! land of freedom and the free!
When will you understand true charity?
When will you learn that her own children are
The fittest objects of a country's care?"

THE SPIRIT OF LAW.

"Enough! enough!" exclaimed an angry voice,
"The court has nothing left it but the choice
Between two courses; either to adjourn,
Or to the subject of debate return.
Counsel have touched on all things 'neath the sun;
The sole exception being the very one
On which our judgment's prayed. This much is clear:
That evidence is sadly wanting here.
Plaintiff declares, that could this mortal see
The consequences of his villainy,
(Presumptive villainy, for this may prove
A very proper legal sort of love),
He would persist in his unrighteous plot.

Defendant's answer states that he would not.
An issue must be tried before the court
Whose practice reaches actions of the sort:
The 'Spirits of the Night' must try the case;
They have the power, before his eyes, to place
A dream, in colours so distinct and bright,
That long years seem to centre in a night.
Let him be shown the ruin that awaits
The hapless victim of seduction's baits.
If, warned by this, he turn to virtue's side,
Deaf to the promptings both of lust and pride,
The sacred volume must be held to be
A mortal soul's securest panoply.
Leave we the trial to Night's potent spirits;
The case must rest on its intrinsic merits."

This sentence uttered, by one impulse fired,
Behind his charge each guardian sprite retired.
Darkness again prevailed for some short space
Till (their bright eyes illumining the place),
Flitting around the youth, now here, now there.
Two spirits of another kind appear.
'Twere past the limner's subtle art, I ween,
To represent these actors in the scene;
Shape, outline, feature, change before the eye
Has time to subject them to scrutiny;

Nay, ere the sight can telegraph the brain
Its mirrored picture, all has changed again.
Yet each appears to exercise his art
In his own place: the one upon the heart,
Makes, with transparent finger, certain signs,
The other to the head his care confines.
Now heart, now head, is victor in the strife:
His dream was an epitome of life.

END OF THE FIRST CANTO.

CANTO SECOND.

THE DREAM.

ARGUMENT.

The lover's retreat—Love's delirium—The change—Society—The guests—The heiress—Music; its attributes—The governess—The dance—The evening at sea—The ruined castle—The youth surrounded by his companions—The betrothed—The refusal—The bridge—The victim—The lost one's tale—Waking reflections.

CANTO SECOND.

THE DREAM.

I.

AGAIN before his ravished eyes
The beauteous maiden stood;
Oh! she had ne'er appeared so fair,
So worthy to be wooed.
Her cheeks, with constant blushes warm;
Her large and liquid eyes;
Two seas of tenderness, in which
A world of promise lies;
Yielding, affectionate, and kind,
No frown o'erclouds that face,
As with a soul-revealing sigh
She sinks in his embrace.

II.

He clasps her to his beating heart,
Which guilty passions swell;
With fiery eloquence he pleads,
And pleads, alas! too well.
That night, with quick and timid step,
She leaves her peaceful home,
Trusts to the tempter's promises,
And firmly seals her doom.
Bewildered, wavering, hoping,
She quits her native dale:
Thus perjury wins virtue's self,
Thus arts of hell prevail.

III.

He bore her to her future home,
So deemed the partial maid;
He fondly calmed the rising fears
Of her he had betrayed.
While she, too willing to believe
His trust-inspiring lies,
Regarded every act of his
With love's o'er-partial eyes;
And often, when a struggling doubt
Would into being start,
Took shame unto herself to nurse
Suspicion in her heart.

IV.

It scarce were possible for love
To find a meeter spot;
Embosomed in a mountain's side
Peeped forth a tiny cot,
Far from the busy haunts of men,
Where the romantic Wye
Pursues its infant babbling course
In nature's minstrelsie:
A wood encircled jealously,
A ruin watched above,
Lest some rude mortal should invade
This sanctuary of love.

V.

Here, in an atmosphere of bliss,
Reposed the youthful pair,
Too wrapped in love's delicious trance
To heed the frown of care;
Though, ever and anon would pass
Across her speaking eyes
A transient shade of sadness;
A gentle sigh would rise,
But to be stifled on her lips
By passion's warm caress,
Or echoed back reproachfully
With glance of mute distress.

VI.

Oft on the streamlet's verdant banks
Their truant footsteps stray;
Heedless of Time's too rapid flight,
Till the declining day,
Lengthening the mountain shadow,
With giant finger shows,
That nature is about to hush
The world to its repose.
While the bright coronet of gold,
That crowns the mountain's crest,
Looks like the fond sun's parting gift,
Ere yet he sinks to rest.

VII.

Together oft they watch the sun
Descend the mountain's side,
More lovely in his soft decline
Than in his noonday pride.
So beauty in its zenith height
Doth dazzle and amaze;
Its bright effulgence overpowers,
Nor suffers us to gaze;
But, in its mellower season,
A thousand charms appear,
As mind conspires with loveliness
To render it more dear.

VIII.

Fie, youth! inconstant trifler, fie!
The treasure of to-day
Too soon to suffer cold neglect,
To experience love's decay;
Exacting, jealous, passionate,
Should aught thy fancy thwart,
Callous, cruel, and unfeeling,
To her whose gentle heart
Has once confessed its vassalage.
'Tis sad, alas! but true;
Not only dost thou tyrant prove,
But thou art traitor too.

IX.

A few months o'er (how swift they flew
With her that lady fair)
Produced a gradual change in him,
Which filled her with despair.
He who, but some short weeks gone by,
Had known no higher joy,
Than with his loved one's tresses
Continually to toy,
Now counts each hour of the day,
Each minute of the hour,
And finds time lag but wearily,
E'en in his lady's bower.

x.

Full soon he seeks the neighbouring town,
Joins in its pleasures rude,
Unable to appreciate
The sweets of solitude :
Cloyed with possession (once so prized),
He in his victim sees
Naught but a jealous guardian,
Whose charms have ceased to please.
His now so frequent absence
Is easier to be borne,
Than that thin-wove hypocrisy,
Which scarce conceals its scorn.

xi.

Too well she saw the cruel change
In his averted eye ;
And oh ! the misery of that hour,
The damning agony.
The brain refused its function—
No ! she would not believe
That he, the idol of her soul,
Could wantonly deceive ;
And yet she shuddered inwardly,
When venturing to compare
His former fond devotedness
With his now altered air.

XII.

Why should we trace the death of love,
As slowly it declines,
The soul's sad sickness under which
Misguided woman pines ;
When, love's illusion o'er, she finds
That she has yielded all
To one whose false and tinsel flame
Has scarce survived her fall ?
Why wonder that the dastard blow,
Which hurls her from her throne,
Should turn her honey into gall,
Her heart to hardest stone ?

XIII.

Yet must she smile, tremendous task !
The martyr's at the stake
Is child's play in comparison !
Oh ! that the heart would break,
And not survive its happiness,
Nor linger at death's door ;
Its cherished freight a total wreck
On the world's iron shore !
A prey to all the waves of fate,
The hissing winds of scorn,
Which blow so keenly upon one
Left helpless and forlorn !

XIV.

Quit we the sad, the sickening theme:
The mortal who descends
To practise thus on confidence
For his own selfish ends,
Merits more deep damnation,
Deserves more hissing scorn,
Than the red murderer for whom
The depths of vengeance yawn.
He kills by foulest treachery,
Uproots the fairest flower,
Who blights a maiden's innocence,
Her best, her richest dower.

XV.

The scene is shifted suddenly.
He finds himself among
The votaries of fashion's shrine,
A bright and brilliant throng;
Grouped gracefully, yet carelessly,
A large saloon displays
A well assorted company;
The man of former days
Chats with the ruddy schoolboy,
Well up in cricket's game,
And sighs to find himself so changed,
The world so much the same.

XVI.

Women of every age are there;
The dowager whose *début*
Had charmed the courtly group, while yet
This century was new,
Half buried in a couch reclines
In most luxurious ease,
A couch whose soft persuasive shape
A Sybarite might please;
The matron and the blushing bride,
Maidens of every time,
The young, the old, those who are in,
And those long past their prime.

XVII.

E'en happy childhood strikes the eye,
Or rather strikes the ear,
Showing its whereabouts with laugh
So natural and clear;
Those tresses which, an hour ago,
Were not a hair awry,
Now, in disorder scattered,
In rich confusion lie.
How beautiful that rosy tint,
How bright those laughing eyes,
Which mirror each emotion's play,
And scorn to use disguise.

XVIII.

Apart from the more noisy guests,
With grave and solemn mien,
Deep in its silent mysteries,
Whist's worshippers are seen :
That man with lofty forehead
Intent upon the cards,
The destinies of states controls,
And England's honour guards ;
Leaving kings, queens, ambassadors,
And diplomatic scuffles,
Their pasteboard representatives
He cavalierly shuffles.

XIX.

There is young Kidglove of the "Greens,"
Who joined the ranks of Mars,
Seduced by the gay uniform,
But never dreamt of wars ;
His field duties attendance
At picnics and excursions ;
His laurels won at "Fêtes Champêtres,"
Or similar diversions.
The ball room proves his tactics ;
Here his polite attention
And simpering smile obtain
"Most honourable mention."

XX.

That is young Highflier, than whom
No jockey is more able,
More skilled in the "arcana"
Of betting ring and stable;
Who votes all this thing slow,
And wonders what one can see
In music or in dancing
To take a fellow's fancy.
Give him his horses and his dogs,
His betting book and tandem,
He'll leave all bothering parties
To those who understand them.

XXI.

There is a living duke;
Oily, the favourite preacher;
Longlocks, the boudoir poet,
A dear delightful creature;
Puzzle'm, the Cantab don,
That intellectual giant,
Challenging wordy warfare,
With look and eye defiant.
These all have toadies in their train,
For social life is cumbered,
Just like the vegetable world,
With parasites unnumbered.

XXII.

These simper acquiescence
Whene'er, by careful gleaning,
They manage haply to make out,
Or guess his grace's meaning;
The parson's exposition
Receives a due ovation;
The poet's vanity is soothed
By a well-aimed quotation;
The don propound's a theory
With loud and pompous diction,
And deems the silence that ensues
The offspring of conviction.

XXIII.

There are the lesser satellites,
The squires and their ladies;
The doctor and the lawyer;
But no one who in trade is.
These form a group apart,
And seek, with furtive glances,
To catch the great man's eye
When he perchance advances.
There is a curate whose small pay
I hardly like to mention,
Though how he manages to live
Is past my comprehension.

XXIV.

And then the Phœnix of the night
An heiress, to whom rumour
So fabulous a fortune gave,
That it appeared to doom her
To single blessedness at once;
No settlements could offer
A sum at all proportionate
To that which filled her coffer.
And what was stranger than all this,
Oh, union most uncommon!
Nature in her fair person tried
To form a perfect woman.

XXV.

Hers was the poetry of form,
That grace so rarely seen,
The soft voluptuous outline
Of Paphia's peerless queen,
But breathing, virginal, untouched
By sorrow or by sin,
Warmed by a heart that lighted up
The mansion from within:
Her ivory throat a pillar meet
For the small classic head;
While love and virtue round her
Their holiest incense shed.

XXVI.

The sculptor in her perfect form
His own ideal saw;
Her presence on earth's coarser clay
Inspired a sense of awe;
The faultless beauty of her face
Was heightened by the mind,
Which lent each feature eloquence,
And happily combined
The mental with the physical;
Her dark and lustrous eyes
Flash brightly, or cloud languidly,
As various feelings rise.

XXVII.

Yet oftentimes would those ripe lips
Give passage to a sigh;
Those eyes would brilliant drops distil,
When, in her privacy,
She thought upon her orphan state,
Longed for a parent's kiss;
Fortune, so lavish otherwise,
Had been unkind in this.
E'en in the midst of pleasure's train
She felt herself alone;
And loneliness has pangs for which
No fortune can atone.

XXVIII.

Calm, self-possessed, and quiet,
And yet withal as free
From sick'ning affectation
As from idle vanity,
No studied effort marred the effect
Her matchless beauty caused.
Hushed by her voice's Siren tones
Men in their converse paused,
Fearing to lose a single word;
And when she ceased to speak
Were silent, till their silence brought
The blush to her fair cheek.

XXIX.

Oh, charm, to which e'en beauty yields!
Can aught on earth so stir
The soul's most secret feeling, as
The dulcet tones of her
To whom benignant nature
Has, in her bounty, given
Her daintiest gift, "a soft, sweet voice,"
That attribute of heaven?
Oh, doubly, trebly armed is she;
No heart so hard but owns
A mute responsive echo
To woman's 'witching tones.

XXX.

At the first summons, to her harp
She moves with nymphlike grace;
The muse of harmony in her
Might truant fancy trace.
She sweeps the chords, the thrilling notes
Her breast's deep feelings prove;
Now a soft melting cadence shows
A soul attuned to love:
The wrapt and listening heart,
Almost too hushed to beat,
Approaches by degrees the goal
Where pain and pleasure meet.

XXXI.

Oh, Music! would I had the skill
To worthily rehearse
Thy deep and soul-felt beauties
In due and fitting verse.
Oh, lofty theme, alas! too high,
How sing thee as I ought:
Thou eldest born of heaven!
Thou foster nurse of thought!
Awaking in the heart of man
All that is great and grand,
Thou raisest him to that bright arch
By which the world is spanned.

XXXII.

Thou emanation from above!
Thou hast the power to change
The hard and stubborn heart of man;
To extend the narrow range
Of mental vision: fanned by thee,
Nature's warm feelings glow;
At thy sweet summons, from our eyes
The tears of pity flow.
Our hearths, our country, all,
Seem more than ever dear,
As music's wild exciting strain
Falls on a freeman's ear.

XXXIII.

How oft thy magic strains recall
The visions of the past,
Memories which o'er the chastened soul
A holy sorrow cast;
Thou callest up departed friends,
Eclipsed by death's dark night;
Raised for a moment by thy power,
They flash before the sight;
And as thy glorious notes ascend,
Bearing our thoughts on high,
Thou aidest faith and hope to prove
Man's immortality.

XXXIV.

Thou speakest every tongue on earth,
  Or rather, all mankind
Interpret that sweet language
  Which whispers to the mind;
To thy voice every heart responds,
  All worship at thy shrine,
However rude the offering be,
  Thou mightiest of the Nine!
In the full womb of coming time,
  Methinks I view in thee
A link to join in bonds of love
  The human family.

XXXV.

Sweet muse of harmony, forgive:
  Thou, whom the heaven-born few
Have striven emulously to sing,
  Accept my tribute too,
Humble but heart-felt offering;
  To none on earth I yield
In admiration of thy charms,
  Else had I left the field
To loftier spirits; yet, O muse,
  Let me essay to swell
The world-wide chorus of the praise
  Thou meritest so well.

XXXVI.

She ceased her strain, and every eye
  Upon the Siren turned,
Each lip o'erflowed with flattery,
  Each breast with pleasure burned;
As turning with a native grace
  She bowed her thanks and smiled
Upon the partner of her task,
  A creature meek and mild,
Whom none appeared to notice,
  Whom all passed coldly by,
Or paid her salutation back
  With chilling courtesy.

XXXVII.

Not so the lady of the harp.
  In kind and earnest tones
She thanks her sister melodist,
  And half the praise disowns;
Throws on that slighted being
  Some portion of the rays
Which gild a high-born station
  In these birth-loving days;
Eschews all airs of patronage,
  And with true woman's art
Seeks not to dazzle or amaze,
  But aims to touch the heart.

XXXVIII.

Nor hard the task; for her sweet smile
Had thawed the veriest churl
That ever frowned on happiness:
But on a friendless girl,
More lonely in society
Than in her cheerless room,
Where, in the twin companionship
Of solitude and gloom,
Her tears at least were free to flow,
On her such kindness wrought
A cure for half the paltry slights
Of which she was the sport.

XXXIX.

Hardest of fates! too hard, alas!
Tuition's wages are
Insult, neglect, ingratitude,
A life of constant care,
A goading apprehension
Of long prospective want,
An absence of all sympathy,
A nauseous flood of cant,
A menial's wages, nay, far less;
This will ye surely find,
Ye who aspire to teach the young,
To train the immortal mind.

XL.

Our youth essays to share the smile
  Of her whom all admire;
His winning manners in her heart
  A preference inspire:
In shortest space he feels as though
  He spoke to one long known;
Their conversation soon assumes
  A soft, familiar tone.
Thoughts, sentiments, opinions,
  So happily agree,
Each in the other's nature can
  A kindred spirit see.

XLI.

Now in the mazy dance her form
  Is circled by his arms;
Now some responsive smile gives birth
  To captious love's alarms;
Or, turned on him a moment,
  A thrilling glance conveys
A world of meaning, and all sense
  Of jealousy allays—
A glance whose rapid eloquence
  Outstrips the speed of thought,
The electric current of the soul
  By kindred spirit caught.

XLII.

Anon upon a vessel's deck,
Skimming the moonlit sea,
The yielding form of her he loves
Encircled lovingly;
The Orb of Night, with lustre mild,
Lights up the fairy scene,
Suggesting to the heart of man
All that he might have been,
Or trusts to be hereafter.
Oh, radiant Queen of Night!
Why are thy soft and silvery beams
So grateful to the sight?

XLIII.

Is it that thou with pitying look
Regardest all below,
And dost not seek too cunningly
Our hidden deeds to know?
Unlike that orb whose searching rays,
Darting through smallest space,
Plainly before the conscious mind
Each imperfection place.
The sun, a stern and upright judge,
With clear, all-seeing eye,
While thou seest nought that haply might
Outrage thy purity.

XLIV.

Fraught with love's silent eloquence,
Their humid eyes discourse;
A single word were treason now;
The softest voice is hoarse
When it disturbs that holy pause
Which tired nature makes,
That hour when, scorning the dull earth,
The soul of man awakes.
The vessel slumbers on the wave,
E'en the rough seaman feels
The dreamy influence of the charm
Which o'er the senses steals.

XLV.

Hark! it is surely fancy. No;
Again I hear that strain;
Borne on the idle wind it floats
Across the moonlit main;
A sound of blended voices,
That charms the listening ear;
Now fading into silence, now
Melodiously clear;
Keeping responsive echo
Unto the dipping oar,
A joyous party slowly gains
The scarce-distinguished shore.

XLVI.

O Nature! how mysterious,
How wonderful art thou!
Before thy rich simplicity
Art's noblest triumphs bow.
How sweetly doth the human voice
In mellow cadence fall:
What tone from pealing organ sent
Can the hushed soul enthral
As chorus of sweet voices,
Attuned by Nature's power,
Sweeping in concert o'er the deep,
At evening's stilly hour?

XLVII.

Now in an ivy-mantled tower,
Whose ruined walls attest
The march of that relentless foe
Whose labours know no rest;
A ruined hearth proclaims the spot
Where erst a noble sat,
And entertained a haughty queen
In all the pride of state:
So mighty then, so lowly now,
No sermon can convey
More wholesome moral than the thought
Of grandeur passed away.

XLVIII.

Amongst his youthful compeers next
He stands with conscious air,
The acknowledged winner of the prize,
The favoured of the fair;
Such various charms, such wondrous wealth,
So many smiling friends,
Rarely indeed the fickle dame
Such store of favours sends.
Ah! youth, beware: a smiling face
Oft like a mask conceals
More venom than the deadliest scowl
Which enmity reveals.

XLIX.

And now at evening's tranquil hour,
That hour to lovers dear,
E'en though its darkening shadows show
The parting moment near.
Too cruel Time! relentless foe!
Nor youth nor beauty may
Arrest thy hurrying progress,
Obtain the least delay;
Oh, couldst thou know but half the pangs
Which youthful lovers feel
When forced to part, lip pressed to lip,
Their sad "good-night" they seal.

L.

"Good-night, good-night!" repeats the youth,
"Good-night!" responds the maid;
Until from sight he is shut out
By night's too jealous shade.
"To-morrow's sun will smile upon
Your oft repeated vow;
Yet two days more a bridal wreath
Will crown that lovely brow."
Presumptuous mortal! thou art blind,
Short-sighted one, can'st see,
E'en for a moment, through the gloom,
Which veils futurity?

LI.

'Tis eve: the youth, with youth's hot haste,
Quickens his courser's flight;
Between him and his happiness
There intervenes a night.
What fancies dance through that young brain!
What airy visions rise!
His panting servant finds it hard
To follow as he flies;
The gate is reached; the grinning hind
Has scarce the latch let fall,
Ere he, with passion's fiery haste,
Has gained the stately hall.

LII.

He entered quickly where so oft
A clamorous welcome hailed
The arrival of the expected one;
Sudden his conscience quailed.
The guardian of the heiress played
The ceremonious host:
All was polite but chilling,
Good breeding's glistening frost;
The loved one absent? why this change?
This cold reception, why?
Wouldst know the reason? search awhile
Thy treacherous memory.

LIII.

Sudden the door was opened wide,
And entering was seen
His promised bride, so cold, so pale,
She looked like sorrow's queen;
But not with sorrow's bending port,
For pride's sustaining power,
Backed by her conscious rectitude,
Had nerved her for this hour.
She bent her head with haughty grace,
As with a swelling breast,
Scorn darting from her eyes the while,
She thus the youth addressed.

THE BETROTHED (SPEAKS).

"My lord! I trust you will not deem that I
Am swayed by whim, or girlish phantasy,
In what I have to say: I would entreat,
You will not let an empty phantom cheat
Your hopes so far. I were indeed to blame,
If I permitted a false sense of shame
To turn me from what I consider right;
Else, had I gladly shunned my task to-night.
Dream not that whispered malice has the power,
In my esteem, a valued friend to lower.
Scandal I loathe, but I were mad indeed
To friendly caution to refuse all heed;
Or treat with incredulity a tale,
Whose sad relation caused my soul to quail;
A tale in which you played so black a part
(Though I believed you guiltless in my heart),
That it was due to me, no less than you,
To prove the accusation was untrue.
Need I say more? my efforts failed; and why?
Too deep, too patent, was your infamy.
I might have left to fitter lips than mine
The task of stating why I now decline
The honour, which you kindly would confer
On my unworthy self. I know I err
Against 'the tyrant custom'; but with me
Candour and truth outweigh propriety.

My lord! I own I gave a full assent
To your attentions—nay, was well content
To trust my fate to one who seemed to me,
In heart and feelings, all that man should be.
I saw the mind reflected in the face,
Where, foolish girl, I dreamt that I could trace
A thousand signs of truth's ingenuous grace.
To such a being I engaged my hand;
Not to a serpent who had coldly plann'd
The ruin of a young and trusting heart
By foulest treachery and basest art;
Who, after heaping on her wretched head
The worst of insults, like a coward fled.
Little I guessed, forsooth, that every smile
Was stolen from the victim of your guile;
And I a party to the theft—poor fool!
I was too vain to deem myself a tool.
But I forget my purpose: I am wrong
In giving this wide license to my tongue.
Enough that I refuse a rank to share,
Enough that I disdain a name to bear,
Which have been sullied by such acts as prove
Their owner quite unworthy of my love.
Farewell, my lord! and may that power, who
Absolves our sins, show mercy unto you.
Your wanton crime compels me thus to sever
Our promis'd bond—my lord, adieu for ever!"

LIV.

The outraged fair one quits the scene,
Nor does the culprit dare
To offer words in his defence:
Rage, phrenzy, and despair,
Tug at his heart-strings with such force,
That when at length he speaks,
His voice is less like speech divine,
Than some hoarse raven's shrieks:
Too late the guilty youth would fain
Be cleansed from vice's slime;
Too late perceives that vengeance treads
Upon the heels of crime.

LV.

The host, in mercy to his state,
Entreats him to be calm;
His wild and haggard air excite
To pity and alarm;
But, with a curse upon his lips,
The madman breaks away,
Calls for his horse with stern command,
That brooks of no delay;
Nor waits he then, his angry mood
Admits of nought like rest;
He quits the hated spot ere one
Can answer his behest.

LVI.

Alone, to the cool evening breeze
He bares his fevered brow;
Alas! that simple remedy
Will not avail him now.
Within his inmost heart of hearts
The fire so fiercely burns;
Conscience, so often thrust aside,
With tenfold force returns;
With cynic sneer he tries to drown
His torment's sharp appeals;
And with a fiend's philosophy
His stubborn bosom steels.

LVII.

Bracing and cool, the thin night air;
The young moon shed a ray,
Which lightly tipped with silver edge
A ruined tower that lay
Flanking a noble river,
Athwart whose channeled bed
In dark uncertain outline
Its threatening shadow spread:
A time-touched bridge o'erspanned the stream,
Whose gurgling waters strove
To kiss the fabric's massive piers,
While swiftly on they drove.

LVIII.

Upon this bridge the wilful youth
A moment paused and sighed:
Scarce two hours since and he had passed
That spot elate with pride.
But pride is quenched, and to its seat
Far other feelings start;
The promptings of the ready fiend
Are busy at his heart:
As o'er the peaceful stream he leans,
Dark thoughts besiege his mind,
Suggesting that beneath its waves
He may oblivion find.

LIX.

But no! that triumph were too great,
His proud heart scorns the thought,
That he to coward suicide
Should be impelled by aught.
He hurries on; the centre reached,
A shivering female stands,
Intently gazing on the stream,
Upraised her thin wan hands:
His conscience pricks him onward,
Prompts that he here may save
Some wretch who seeks to cheat her cares
Beneath the river's wave.

LX.

He speaks, and at his voice's sound,
Two bright and dazzling eyes
Flash with the sudden violence
Of madness and surprise.
A moment more she shrieks and falls.
That shriek, so wild and shrill,
Chills the warm current of his blood
And nullifies his will;
And coupled with it is *his* name!
Amazed, in that pale face
The victim of his heartless lust
His eyes too surely trace.

LXI.

With outstretched hands he fain would raise
That prostrate form; but, no!
From his polluting touch she shrinks,
As from her deadliest foe,
Springs to her feet, and stands erect.
Nay, in the moon's pale beam,
Her figure, rigid with her scorn,
Doth more than mortal seem;
Her glaring eyes fixed full on his,
Her face unearthly pale,
Seduction's victim, in his ears
Thus thunders forth her tale.

THE LOST ONE'S TALE.

"Thou ! can it be, or do my cheated eyes
Behold some mocking fiend in human guise ?
No, 'tis himself—the tempter—it is he !
The author of my shame, my misery ;
By whose false vows and perjured oaths I fell
From virtue's height to vice's lowest hell ;
To whom my heart, my soul, my all was given ;
By whom to sin's abyss I have been driven ;
Who from a trusting girl her virtue stole,
And, not content with that, must damn the soul ;
Who, pander like, made over to his friend
The being whom he promised to defend,
Treated his victim like a beast of price,
And made a market of his very vice.
Coward and villain ! Could my state impart
No touch of pity to thy stony heart ?
E'en though thou wert incapable of love,
Could not humanity thy conscience move ?
Did not my unborn infant mutely plead
For mercy to its mother in her need ?
Ah ! do my words excite thy noble bile ?
Small care have I for either frown or smile.
Wretch ! demon ! fiend ! thou shalt not pass till I
Have dinned the sequel of thy villainy
Into those ears. Alas ! full well I know
That, past that sense, words will not, cannot go.

But to my tale. When, craven like, you fled,
I felt within my heart a secret dread;
For a pure nature, once deceived, assumes
Suspicion as an armour, and becomes
Doubly suspicious. Oh, that dreadful night!
How thankful was I when the morning light
Cleared multiplying horrors from my brain,
And gave my soul the power to hope again.
The day dragged on; your friend arrived, and then
I learned, with wonder, what mean things are men;
Found that you nobly had arranged to sell
Her whose sole fault was loving you too well.
But he to whom you basely made me o'er,
When he had heard my short sad story, swore
That he would rather die than stoop to be
A partner in such monstrous villainy.
He was a *man*, and one in whose warm heart
Vice was not linked with treachery and art:
His vices on his soul but lightly sat;
Yours are your own, deep-rooted and innate;
You, by your flight, outraged each human tie,
He showed your victim every sympathy.
By his advice (may heaven reward his care!
And acts like his, I feel, are treasured there)
I sought my home, I dared to turn my face
Towards him on whose grey hairs I'd brought disgrace—
My outraged father. Like a guilty thing
I waited, till the night, with friendly wing,

Shrouded my features in its close disguise,
And hid my altered form from prying eyes.
A cold and chilling mist, a driving rain
Beat on my fevered brow, but beat in vain:
I struggled on, uncertain, weary, worn,
My soul a prey to doubt, my bosom torn
By keenest anguish, while my wavering mind
Now towards hope, and now to fear inclined.
Wearied, at length I reached the well-known gate;
The place to me seemed strangely desolate;
No cheering light from latticed window shone;
I strove to catch a sound—alas! no tone
Of long familiar voices met my ear;
I felt a wild, strange, melancholy fear
Creep o'er me; while the damp and murky air,
And death-like silence drove me to despair.
At length, more bold, within the porch I stand,
And seek admission with a faltering hand.
But no reply—no signs of life appear;
My beating heart the only sound I hear.
Frantic, at last, with all my strength I try
To attract some notice: in my agony
I kneel upon the wet and reeking sod,
And dare, in prayer, address my outraged God;
My faltering orison yields no relief;
Doubt adds its terrors to my bitter grief.
Now round the farm I steal, and try to find
Some sign to reassure my troubled mind:

Fruitless my search—in stable, barn, or stall;
I visit each, but they are vacant all.
In hopeless agony I turn from thence,
A prey to all the horrors of suspense,
Retrace my footsteps, and, with o'ercharged breast,
Enter the village, hushed in midnight rest;
Steal past each well-known porch with guilty fear,
Longing to know the truth I dread to hear.
Beyond the village, in a crazy shed,
Lives a lone woman, whom her neighbours dread:
At midnight hour, beneath the moon's pale shade,
She culls the herbs which aid her baneful trade;
With hellish art compounds decoctions foul
(Poisons at once to body and to soul).
At her approach the children cease to play,
And e'en the rustic matrons steal away;
Fearing her withering curse, the tired boor
Quickens his sauntering pace when near her door.
Through her dull casement a faint, glimmering light
Falls like a ray of hope upon my sight;
My fears are conquered, desperate I turn
To her shunned porch, the dreaded truth to learn:
I knock, and soon the hag, with accent sour,
Demands my purpose at so late an hour;
My name once heard, she opes her creaking door,
And with quick eye my wasted face scans o'er;
Then, taught mistrust by age, peers in my eyes;
And mutters words of wonder and surprise;

First bids me enter, in a sullen tone,
Then cautiously secures her dwelling lone:
Half dead with fear, a chair receives my frame;
The crone meanwhile mouths o'er and o'er my name,
As if the memory's maze, not all effaced,
Required some clue by which it might be traced.
Some minutes then she rocks her palsied head,
My eyes the while survey the ruined shed.
Herbs, once so green, now dried and withering lie,
A fitting type of my sad destiny;
Upon the hearth a low and smouldering flame,
That gave nor light, nor heat, yet served to tame
The raw, inclement air. A huge black cat
Rubbed round the chair in which its mistress sat,
Its large green eyes glared on me as it moved,
Acting as sentry to the thing it loved.
Scarce had I time these various signs to note,
Ere words broke harshly from the witch's throat.
'Ah, dainty one,' she cried; 'you here! Yon boy
Was like them all, soon tired of his toy.
Ah, well! ah, well! I mind you ever were
Different to all the sullen brutes down here;
Your word was ever gentle, and I could,
On your farm, gather sticks and rotten wood
Without a curse, or else a snarling cur
Let loose to force the devilish hag to stir.

Ah, well! I'm grateful: now I never hear
Aught but the muttered words of hate and fear.
Your poor old father——' At that name I fell;
In those few words I heard a parent's knell;
The cottage swam before my dizzy brain,
Long I lay senseless, till, recalled again
By that lone woman's care, tearless I stood,
And heard the fruits of my ingratitude.
My father, from the hour of my flight,
Ne'er looked, with conscious eye, on Heaven's light;
Speechless and crippled, for some time he lay,
His farm, the meanwhile, falling to decay;
Till a harsh agent, and the law's fell fang,
Finished the ruin which his child began.
The parish-poorhouse gave its grudging care
To him whose generous heart would ever share
His meal with misery's child; not long was he
An inmate of that home of poverty;
That power who willed that he should not repine
At my disgrace, or view his own decline,
Freed his imprisoned soul from mortal clay,
To again expand in heaven's unclounded day.
Judge of my horror when I found that I
Had added murder to my infamy;
I used nor steel, nor drug, nor leaden ball,
But a more fatal engine than them all,

A child's ingratitude, that weapon sure
To pierce a parent's bosom to the core.
That fearful night passed like some hideous dream;
I left the spot with morning's faintest gleam;
The hag in vain spoke of the untimely hour;
Whispered of certain drugs that have the power
To outrage nature in her closest ties,
And hide my open shame from prying eyes;
Shuddering with horror, from this nest of sin
I flee—yet ere my wanderings begin,
I seek the still churchyard, and try to trace,
By the grey light, my father's resting place.
That duty paid, my faltering steps I bend
To that huge town whose vastness knows no end:
The meanest lodging in its meanest street,
Yet good enough for misery's retreat,
Was mine;—here, in due course of time, I pressed
My ill-starred infant to my throbbing breast,
In its embrace felt something like relief
From my past suffering and gnawing grief;
Yet did its sex foreboding thoughts employ;
I should have felt less anxious with a boy;
Dear bought experience made me shudder, when
I thought on all the wiles and snares of men.
But soon my fears assumed another form;
Another subject filled me with alarm;
My funds, which, guarded with a miser's care,
Had served to keep me on a miser's fare,

Were almost gone ; yet did I not repine ;
One blessing still remained while health was mine ;
And I could work, and trusted to obtain
Something by which I might a pittance gain :
A willing mind, I had been taught to think,
Could not to downright want untimely sink.
Ah, cruel error ! bitter, taunting lie !
A seeming truth—a hollow fallacy !
How oft, elate with hope, I left my home ?
How oft returned, with ill success o'ercome ?
What weary miles ? what hours in waiting passed ;
But to be brutally refused at last ;
Or, if not that, offered so small a price,
That e'en the very fiend of avarice
Had blushed to name it ; yet these vampires found
Their sordid offers on substantial ground.
They have, lynx-eyed, discovered, what might pass
Less greedy mortals,—that the lowest class
Are not the poorest—that the poor require,
As labour's wage, bread, shelter, clothes, and fire.
They see that there are thousands whose small gains
Form, on the whole, a sum which ill maintains
Those signs external, which, in worldly cant,
Are termed appearances, and which to want
Is sheer starvation. Many a female plies
Her constant needle, dims her sparkling eyes,
Her task, fools deem, to pass the time away ;
Nonsense ! she works, like all the world, for pay,

But living, as she does, at others' charge,
She can, in this way, her mean wage enlarge;
Saps her young life to make a false parade;
Nor let the world suspect she is half paid.
Thus does a fiendish selfishness contrive
On others' misery to gaily live;
And thus the very poorest of the poor
Lay half their earnings at the rich man's door.
Day after day I try, without success,
To find employment. Oh, the bitterness
Of that sad search! to see the living tide
Press onward, all intent and occupied;
To feel the will, the wish to fill a place,
However small, in labour's busy race,
And meet, at each attempt, a fresh rebuff,
Tries a soul formed of nature's sternest stuff.
One day, when near the end of my dull round,
A written notice caused my heart to bound:
Labour was wanted, it was work that I
Had practised almost from my infancy;
The finest cambric served not to suffice
The wants of luxury; to enhance its price,
The embroiderer's skill was needed; I applied,
This time my meek request was not denied,
Nay, was accepted; and my wondrous pay,
By hardest work procured, twelvepence a day;
Twelve hours' constant labour, but no food;
Hot water, it is true, they did include;

Yet even this was heaven, when I thought
That what my child required might be bought.
Poor love! she never knew her natural food,
Grief had dried up the source from whence it flowed;
And day by day I saw, with pain and fright,
Her cheeks grow thinner and her eyes less bright;
I sought advice, my darling in my arms,
I feared to hear confirmed my soul's alarms,
For all my soul was centred in my child;
Oh, what was life to me of her despoiled!
Behold me now at the physician's door,
With my last piece of gold, my only store;
In turn am called, and, with an anxious heart,
My fears and my necessities impart.
He was a mild, kind, venerable man,
Who patient heard me, ere himself began:
He told me that my child requirèd more
Good food than physic; that the blood was poor;
She needed nourishment and wholesome air,
Which, with good nursing, would her health repair.
I promised what he ordered should be tried,
And humbly offered all my purse supplied;
Sadly he smiled, gave back the coin again,
Traced a few words with quick and ready pen;

Handed me kindly what appeared to be,
To my unpractised eyes, a recipe;
Pressed my cold, trembling hand within his own;
Charged me to come again in courteous tone;
And bade me hasten to a shop where he
Knew that the drugs were what they ought to be.
I found the house, proffered the paper straight,
And for the medicine sat me down to wait;
When, to my great amazement, gracious heaven!
Five golden pieces were politely given.
I sought for explanation, and was told
The paper did not order drugs, but gold.
How did my heart with gratitude o'erflow;
A rock of refuge in my sea of woe,
A friend was found to whom I could apply;
I felt my heart expand; sweet sympathy
Shed its warm lustre o'er my prospect drear,
Illumed my faint-sketched hope, and banished fear.
Again I saw the welcome bloom of health
In that sweet face which formed my only wealth;
And, in that sight, almost forgot my pain;
Nay, dared to dream of happiness again.
Too soon, be sure, does hateful want return
To one whose efforts such a trifle earn.
Again my loved one's roses fade from view,
Again I see privation's sickly hue;

Want, baffled once, returns with doubled force ;
My wretched fortunes fall from bad to worse.
That pittance small now fails me in my need ;
Employment ceases, I am poor indeed !
A month drags on ; each day that angel frail
Becomes more thin, more dazzlingly pale ;
Her eyes acquire that steadfast, meaning gaze,
That look which should have come with length of days.
I sought that good, kind man, whose name I loved,
But he to brighter spheres had been removed.
What did I then ? you ask—I turned to *thee !*
You may conceive my abject misery,
When I could stoop so low as to demand
Aught like a favour at thy perjured hand :
But, oh ! to watch my infant's gasping breath,
Her wasted cheeks—inevitable death !
To know the author of her being could
Prevent her perishing from want of food,
Did I but seek him, as I felt I ought,
Nor let her perish by my pride ; the thought
Subdued me quite ; the mother, in my soul,
Drove out all feelings else, and claimed the whole.
I flew to find you, but misfortune still
Dogged every step with unrelenting will.

You were abroad, they said; I turned aside,
Mute with despair, and bankrupt of my pride.
'Twas a raw, gusty night, the chilling wind,
Like the cold world, was cutting and unkind.
My vitals felt sharp hunger's gnawing fang—
A dead, dull, sickening pain, not the swift pang
That, in sheer mercy to the sufferer, kills
All sense of life and its attendant ills:
Nor bread, nor fire, nor light beneath my roof,
Goaded by stinging memory's reproof,
A moral drunkenness o'erwhelmed my mind,
Reckless I wandered, to reflection blind;
Temptation whispered, backed by hunger's voice—
Disgrace or death were offered to my choice.
I struggled, faltered, and, in fine, became
That which my tongue e'en now denies to name.
I fell: let those who would condemn me try
In such a strife to gain the mastery.
Let constant hunger's goading, empty pain
Send up its dark suggestions to the brain.
Look but abroad: each passing figure seems
Fair fortune's child, to envy's sickly dreams;
Add to all this the thought that you possess
No friend to aid you in your dire distress;
That all the troubles under which you smart
Arose from owning a too feeling heart;
That you are starving, hopeless, and despised,
While flaunting vice is flattered, pampered, prized;

Crown the dark picture with a starving child,
And the world's censure must, methinks, be mild.
I fell: yet did I most myself abhor—
Shame, horror, anguish, my sad bosom tore.
I owned a treasure I did not suspect;
I felt its loss—the loss of self-respect.
Till now, whate'er the heartless world might deem,
I paused upon the brink of vice's stream;
Now all opinion I had dared to brave,
By boldly launching on its filthy wave.
Stung by remorse's voice, I vainly try
To drown its tones in inebriety;
Laugh, with a loud and would-be joyous tone,
At things which once had turned me into stone.
That frightful life! A constant acted lie—
Death in the heart and laughter in the eye;
False tears, false smiles—but words are all too faint;
No tongue can aptly tell, no pen can paint
That fallen state, its mad, its feverish joys—
The fruit of drink, which, day by day, destroys
Sense, feeling, conscience, triumphs o'er the will,
And renders hideous vice more hideous still.
Its waking horrors—stinging, sharp remorse—
Again forgotten in guilt's giddy course:

Those scenes, where oft the borrowed colour pales
Beside the crimson which the cheek assails;
This and much more have I endured; and why?
My guilty conscience whispers a reply.
I dared to have a secret, dared conceal
That which my duty bound me to reveal;
Strong in my own conceit, I set at nought
Those laws which woman's instinct might have taught;
Descended to be partner in a cheat,
And fell—a victim to my own deceit.
Oh! that the young and thoughtless could but know
How one false step may plunge them into woe;
That one departure from truth's open plain
Brings falsehood's spurious offspring in its train;
That none can caution, guide, instruct, reprove,
Like those whom God and nature bid us love.
But little more remains; the oft-told tale
Has the same end—the lazar house, the jail!
The last I never knew; the first has been
My late sad refuge in this fitful scene.
What of my child? False villain! would'st pretend
At this dread hour to be my infant's friend?
Dost deem me still so blind as not to see
That thou hast been my deadliest enemy?
Dost think that I would let that angel fair
Owe aught to thee, or risk thy devilish care?

Never! Let gaping worldlings blame the deed;
These hands from life and sin my darling freed.
When late thy words broke on my startled ear,
For her pure soul I breathed my latest prayer.
Canst understand? My child—thy child is—
dead!
Yon tranquil wave flows o'er her gentle head;
Sinless she sleeps; nor can she ever know
Her mother's scarlet shame, her mother's woe.
Murderess! E'en so. My child, I come! I come
To share thy peace and join thee in thy tomb."

LXII.

This said, upon the parapet
With lightning's speed she flew;
Laughing with maniac wildness,
She waved a last adieu,
Then boldly plunged; the treacherous stream
Received in its embrace
That fragile form, of whose dark deed
Its surface showed no trace.
No coward he who sprang to save;
He could not, dared not see,
Without compunction, the last act
Of this sad tragedy.

LXIII.

He sprang to save ; but sleep no more
Had power o'er his frame ;
At that last crowning horror
His waking senses came.
With haggard look he stared around,
But saw nor bridge, nor stream ;
Yet could such vivid scenes be nought
But phantoms of a dream ;
But for the room, the morning light,
The open volume, he
Had felt almost inclined
To doubt his own identity.

LXIV.

His waking senses once restored,
His mental vision clear,
He pondered on that warning dream
With conscience-stricken fear.
Who shall attempt to fathom
The dark deceit of man ?
The hidden purpose of his soul
Who but himself may scan ?
Yet what man's vision fails to note
Cannot escape the eye
Of Him from whom no thought is hid,
" The All-seeing Judge " on high.

LXV.

Humbled, confused, he prayed ;
His prayer, that he might be
Enabled to withstand the assaults
Of man's arch enemy.
He rose again with lighter heart,
Entered a garden fair,
And drank in health and confidence
With the pure morning air.
Here leave we him to think awhile,
And commune with his heart,
Later we 'll see what counsel
The warning did impart.

END OF THE SECOND CANTO.

CANTO THIRD

REALITY.

ARGUMENT.

The morning ramble—The rectory—The Rector—The garden—The breakfast—Love's embarrassments—The confession—The resolve—The meeting of Father and Son—The lovers' confidence—Pride and love opposed—The threat—The angry Sire—The struggle—The issue—The Father's determination—His pilgrimage—Freedom—The lovers' dwelling place—The châlet—Foreigners' ideas—The Husband's departure—The accident—The illness—The recovery—The Husband's return—The recognition—The reconciliation—England again—London—The ancestral hall—Congratulations—The spring morn—The advent of the "Heir"—Conclusion.

CANTO THIRD

REALITY.

I.

JOIN we our hero in his walk.
How clear, how sweet the morn ;
Raindrops, like jewels glistening,
Each pendant leaf adorn.
The sun has welcome in his smile,
The coy breeze woos the cheek,
Nature, with scarce dried tears, repents
The storm's untoward freak.
Slowly the frightened flowers ope
Their petals to the gale,
Greet blushingly their deity,
And all their sweets exhale.

II.

So looks enchanting woman when,
Her anger chased away,
The sunshine of her smile proclaims
The dawn of Love's fair day;
Her humid eyes alone announce
The tempest of the soul;
From her ripe lips the low soft sigh,
She cannot all control,
Sheds its warm fragrance round her path;
The trace of sorrow's tear
Renders her beauty more refined,
Her melting smile more dear.

III.

The feathered tribe their matin hymn
Are warbling in delight;
The soaring lark is winging
His bold aspiring flight;
Each note ecstatic, as he mounts,
Is ringing full and clear;
Like summons from the liquid sky
It bursts upon the ear;
Inviting all the lower world
To share his present joy,
And seek those brighter realms where life
Is free from earth's alloy.

IV.

At times the nightingale is heard,
But changed her brilliant note ;
No longer does a flood of sound
Swell her melodious throat ;
A thousand warblers drown that voice,
Which through the livelong night
Gave beauty to the darkness,
And heralded the light ;
The peerless queen of song laments,
In sadness, her disgrace,
As to more noisy rivals she
Reluctantly gives place.

V.

Our youth, scarce conscious, bends his steps
Where yonder spreading tree
Stands in disdainful solitude
And giant majesty ;
Curling above its massive head
The blue smoke slow ascends,
And to its verdure, deeply green,
A richer colour lends.
Mark you yon clustering ivy,
Yon vane and gable high,
While barns and stacks of quaintest form
Beyond it catch the eye.

VI.

It is the home of her he loves ;
  Yon moss-grown roof enshrines
A treasure to his mind more rich
  Than all Golconda's mines ;
A heart whose firm devotion,
  Whose warm, unselfish truth,
Are mirrored in her deep blue eyes ;
  A form where graceful youth
Struggles with jealous nature,
  Who would assert her right
To stamp the seal of womanhood
  Upon that figure light.

VII.

How every look of those mild eyes,
  How every murmured word,
Crowds thickly to his softened heart ;
  The stream of memory stirred,
A thousand traits of modest love
  Straight to the surface rise,
A thousand nameless nothings,
  Yet priceless in his eyes.
He muses on her loveliness,
  But turns with sudden start,
As the dark shadow of his dream
  Creeps o'er his conscious heart.

VIII.

Why does the moody frown of care
Darken that open brow?
So near the haven of his heart,
Can he be thoughtful now?
Ah me, ah me! if 'mongst the young
Love finds uncounted friends,
He must perforce content himself
With them his empire ends:
To parents' ears too oft his name
Is a forbidden word;
While wealth, state, station, interest,
To love are all preferred.

IX.

His father's eye, his father's frown,
How shall he dare to face?
Will that proud nobleman connive
At such a fell disgrace?
Admit a yeoman's daughter
To quarter on the shield,
Whose cognizance dates from the day
Of Hastings' bloody field?
Or, ere he meets that cold grey eye,
Shall he not counsel ask
Of one whose age and character
Well suit him for the task?

x.

Where shall fit monitor be found ?
Surely he cannot err
Who, his soul tossed by doubts, consults
A Christian minister.
This thought inspires our youth's full heart,
As, with admiring eye,
He marks the verdant turf which belts
The neighbouring rectory.
Yes, none so fit as that good man ;
His case demands far more
Than the false sophistry which oft
Forms worldly wisdom's store.

xi

He enters the well-kept domain,
When suddenly the chime
Struck by the neighbouring church's clock
Reminds him that the time
Is over-early—he retreats ;
But ere he gains the lane,
The Rector's voice, in hearty tone,
Invites him to remain.
No sluggard he ; too well he knew
That all the after day
Was nought, if morning's pliant hours
Pass unimproved away.

XII.

He was a tall and upright man,
O'er whose time-honoured head
The snows of three-score years and ten
Were plentifully shed.
But the bright eye, the ruddy cheek,
The cheerful smile, all showed
That Father Time on him had laid
His very lightest load;
Nor was he wholly free from care;
Each grief that touched his fold,
Provoked the sympathising tear
He knew not to withhold.

XIII.

No whistling boy who reverence made,
No hind who passed his gate,
But could of his benevolence
Some noble proof relate.
Sickness ne'er found him absent,
Trouble ne'er called in vain,
To stammer forth the many ills
Which form its motley train;
Stoutly he battled vice's band,
Abuse and insult braved,
While there was hope that by his means
A sinner might be saved.

XIV.

Nor to the wretched and the poor
Were all his cares confined;
The proper duties of the rich
He rigidly enjoined.
Himself still foremost in the work,
He laboured in the race,
Like one who felt that in this world
Man tarries briefest space.
Vain in his eyes all titles,
Creations of a breath,
Which, like the proud waves, soon subside
In the great ocean, death.

XV.

He was a humble Christian,
Who held in almost scorn
The paltry quibbles of the schools,
The controversial thorn
Which rends religion's sacred veil,
And all profanely shows
The stewards of Christ's dear legacy
Arrayed as bitter foes;
He kept the Christian's beaten track,
Which broad and open lies,
Avoided bigotry, and shunned
Bewildering sophistries.

XVI.

Such was the man to whom the youth
Determined to apply;
Upon his ripened judgment
He knew he might rely;
To his indulgent ear he felt
He could his love confide;
To him, as preacher of "the Word,"
He would bow down his pride:
And then his dream, that warning dream!
Yet must it all be told;
Aye, e'en his inmost thoughts he would
To that good man unfold.

XVII.

His course of action once resolved,
He gazes with delight
On all the flowering beauties
Which proudly court the sight.
Roses of each variety
And every hue are there;
The blushing bud with cloak of moss
Smiles on her sisters fair,
Feigning to hide her mantling cheek
Beneath her rustic hood,
Yet panting to display her charms
In all their plenitude.

XVIII.

Here, too, the modest "pompon" smiles
In innocence serene,
The gem of all her beauteous tribe,
The rose's fairy queen;
Fragrant, retiring, graceful,
The timid one would fain,
Beneath the shelter of her leaves,
Escape the gaze profane;
Forgetting that her balmy breath
Will guide the spoiler's hand,
And bring sad ruin on the bower
Her modesty has planned.

XIX.

The garden's various charms admired,
The good man takes his arm,
And with complacent pride points out
The treasures of his farm.
Now is our hero quite at home;
Here, with a judge's eye,
He scans the stock, and on each breed
Descants right learnedly.
But in a garden, pshaw!
Full well each flower he knew,
Yet cull the common from the rare
Was more than he could do.

XX.

Then came the breakfast, and if I
Must tell the simple truth,
The summons was most welcome
To our half-famished youth;
And such a breakfast; not the meal
Composed of tea and toast,
But one that spoke substantially
In favour of the host.
I have no time for long details,
But this I can declare,
That all things fitting the repast
Were in great plenty there.

XXI.

The cloth removed, the host withdrew,
Leaving our youth, the while,
The postman's latest freight of news
His leisure to beguile;
Though, sooth to say, our hero felt
A fluttering at his heart;
'Twas no slight undertaking his,
A love tale to impart.
He pondered in what words his case
Might be most fitly stated,
But found his logic was at fault,
His eloquence checkmated.

XXII.

He taxed his ingenuity,
But somehow the affair
Appeared more awkward than before;
At length, in blank despair,
He thought of flight; he would defer
His visit till next day.
Vain subterfuge! his case he found
Admitted no delay,
As o'er his memory flashed the thought
That towards the hour of five,
With railroad punctuality,
His father would arrive.

XXIII.

Procrastination would not do,
This fact was very clear;
And after all, from that good man
He had not much to fear;
Besides—but here the butler came,
And, in his blandest tone,
Informed him that the rector was,
At present, quite alone.
An unctuous man that butler,
His full and shining face
Made many a hungry curate
Half envy him his place.

XXIV.

He follows the sleek servitor,
Resolved to brave his fate;
And with the worthy clergyman
Finds himself *tête-à-tête.*
Skilled in the weakness of the heart,
The experienced man pretends
That with his lordship he will use
The privilege of friends.
"Five minutes more and he is free,"
Five minutes he well knew
Would smooth the awkward opening of
An awkward interview.

XXV.

It was a well-proportioned room,
With three bow windows, which
Gave entrance to a balcony
In choice exotics rich:
Venetian blinds, fixed firmly down,
Permitted the fresh air
To enter freely, but kept out
The day's too searching glare:
A cool, subdued, refreshing tone
Pervaded all the place,
Hiding the tell-tale blush which clothed
The youth's ingenuous face.

XXVI.

The tempered light, and more than all,
The churchman's ready tact,
Gave boldness to the penitent,
Who felt that he must act
His part with loyalty and truth ;
He hastened to commence.
Soon, by his theme inspired, he spoke
With heartfelt eloquence ;
Deaf to all else, he failed to note
His hearer's smothered sigh,
As the dear name of her he loved
Escaped unconsciously.

XXVII.

Now with love's fluent energy,
With truth's persuasive tongue,
He spoke of her as one on whom
His very being hung ;
Dwelt on those nobler qualities
Which stand time's searching test,
Called her among all womankind
The noblest, truest, best.
Insensibly the worthy man
Loses his troubled air,
As in the thorny case he finds
The heart at least is there.

XXVIII.

Long years roll back, again he sees
A pure and blushing bride,
Whose graceful air of bashfulness
Struggles with happy pride ;
Yet a few years, and that fair girl,
So envied, so admired,
The last sad office of the Church
Too soon, alas ! required.
He could not, without trembling, see
That gentle being's child
Exposed to danger and disgrace
At which his soul recoiled.

XXIX.

But when the youth, with awestruck voice,
His warning dream unfolds,
The secret finger of design
The astonished priest beholds.
Swept from his thoughts is worldly rank,
Forgotten mortal grade ;
'Tis his to battle Satan's host,
To rush to virtue's aid ;
Love, eloquence, conviction,
Religion, all combine
To win the restless heart of youth
To duty's sacred shrine.

XXX.

Their converse o'er, with altered mien
Slowly the youth returns;
Determination's serious air
All hesitation spurns.
He dreads no more the frown of pride,
The jargon of the world;
To battle with a prejudice
His banner is unfurled.
Backed by that good man's counsel he
No longer courts delay,
But like a youthful warrior pants
To join the coming fray.

XXXI.

Again the noble mansion
Receives its anxious heir;
The spacious centre hall he treads
With thoughtful look of care.
He gazes round abstractedly,
But notes nor knight, nor dame,
Who by the painter's subtle art
Preserve a short-lived fame;
Unnoticed all, the courtier's smile,
The soldier's eagle eye;
Nay, e'en soft beauty in its pride
Is passed unheeded by.

XXXII.

Too tempest-tossed the youth's full heart
To cherish thoughts like these;
His hurried footsteps indicate
A mind but ill at ease.
He chafes at time's slow progress,
Although each minute passed
Brings nearer still the moment
On which his fate is cast;
Shudders to think how short a space
Will clear the pitying gloom
Which shrouds the future, yet would fain
Anticipate his doom.

XXXIII.

At length, though slow the pace of time,
He hears the clock strike five,
The hour by his father named
At which he should arrive;
The carriage stops—my lord alights—
Nods to the butler, who
Has gained an elbowed precedence
Among the flunkey crew;
Stretches two fingers to his son,
Accepts his arm, and now
Enters the mansion of his sires
'Midst ranks who lowly bow.

XXXIV.

A demigod to their dull eyes ;
  Yet the deep lines of care,
Proclaiming the heart's history,
  Show scantiest joy is there.
The clear grey eye, the tall thin form,
  The lip's cold curl attest
The presence of a man who bears
  A viper in his breast ;
The cynic smile, the sallow hue,
  The lofty forehead prove
A being who may all command—
  Except his fellows' love.

XXXV.

The social after-dinner hour,
  The wine, one might have thought,
Would raise our hero's courage—
  But no ; he rather sought
To banish local subjects
  (For to the conscious heart
The most remote allusion strikes
  Like blow from sudden dart)—
Prated of clubs, of theatres, balls,
  Or the last noble fool
Who had by debts, or cards, or friends,
  Been driven from his stool.

XXXVI.

His lordship took his candle,
Yawned out a faint good-night,
Leaving our hesitating swain
In most despondent plight.
To-morrow, yes, to-morrow,
He should be better able
To cope with pride's resistance,
Than o'er the dinner table.
Dull, silly boy! he might have known
That Cupid's best ally
Presided o'er the occasion he
Permitted to slip by.

XXXVII.

But all too soon to-morrow came,
And our young hero found
Himself and sire *tête-à-tête*,
On this most ticklish ground;
His lordship coolly listened,
With calm, unruffled mien;
No sign of anger or surprise
Could at first sight be seen;
Just as in climates tropic
Clear sky in ev'ry part is
When the "White Squall" o'ertakes ye;
And then "Stand clear, my hearties!"

XXXVIII.

The novice told his simple tale:
How first his passion grew;
How struggling into life appeared,
Each hour, some beauty new.
A pitying smile the sire vouchsafed,
As, warming with his theme,
The youth, with Love's ripe eloquence,
Explained his modest scheme:
Some cottage in a brighter clime,
Some quiet sheltered spot,
With her he loved, was all he sought,
He knew no happier lot.

XXXIX.

The father smiled to hear him speak
As Love has ever done,
But his smile was cold and cheerless
As glance of wintry sun,
Which, lighting up the landscape,
Serves but to plainly show
The world-wide desolation, which
Till then we did not know;
Trusting some green spot might exist,
Till undeceived by this,
We pay illusion's penalty
With tears of bitterness.

XL.

But when he told his lifelike dream,
With bated breath and low,
That cynic visage grew as pale
As if the warm blood's flow
Was stopp'd by death's arresting hand.
Nought but the restless eye
Show'd life still subject to the nod
Of ruthless destiny ;
A nervous twitching of the lip
Proved, more than all beside,
How strong the feeling which could thus
In part arrest life's tide.

XLI.

But, with an iron power, the will
Drove nature from her throne ;
The worldly noble would have blushed
To be compelled to own
Such maudlin weakness ; and again
The sceptic, smiling sneer
Resumed its place, and the thin lips
Dismissed their hue of fear ;
A low, half-stifled oath escaped,
When he found out that he
Was not sole "confidant" of this
Bare-faced *agacerie.*

XLII.

He cursed within his inmost heart
The dull and meddling priest,
Who prated of morality
To greatest as to least;
Who would not unto noble birth
Some privilege accord;
But measured sin with equal scale
In peasant and in lord.
Nor could his haughty temper brook
That any one should dare
Proffer advice, ere he thought fit
His pleasure to declare.

XLIII.

Yet on the surface nothing showed,
There all appeared at rest,
Nothing betrayed the passions
That struggled in his breast.
There pride and anger revelled,
And disappointment's sting
Served o'er the other feelings
Its venomed hue to fling;
As some volcano's lofty top
Smiles o'er the verdant plain,
Hiding the seething torrent
Its breast can scarce retain.

XLIV.

The longest tale must have an end ;
  Now must the lover wait
The fiat of his haughty sire,
  Must learn from him his fate.
All on a single word depends,
  And, with attentive ear,
His heart upon his lips, he waits
  That little word to hear.
But too world-wise that father
  To risk, by *Yes* or *No*,
The issue of a scheme which he
  Yet hopes to overthrow.

XLV.

Deprive the tiger of his prey,
  The scorpion of its sting,
Urge patience to a starving man,
  Preach meekness to a king ;
Arrest the progress of the wave,
  The storm's wild force withstand,
Stay the relentless march of time,
  Or death's unsparing hand.
These are as nothing to the task
  Of him who dreams he can
Quench by an idle word the lusts
  That choke the soul of man.

XLVI.

Thus contradiction's rugged path
The sire tried to shun,
By raillery and ridicule
He sought to bend his son;
Laughed at his inexperience,
And wondered much to find
That he to female artifice
Could be so very blind;
Could yield himself so thoroughly
Dupe to a woman's scheme,
As of a *mésalliance*
E'en for an hour to dream.

XLVII.

In philosophic vein he sketched
The passion's headlong race,
How the loved object of the hour
Too soon must cede its place,
As captious fancy ranges;
How woman's smile or pout
Serves to instal the giver,
And drive a rival out;
Laid bare the pangs he must endure
Who yields to passion's voice,
Mistaking mere desire for love,
A fancy for a choice.

XLVIII.

He showed that all appears to youth
To wear a constant smile ;
While manhood's keener sight detects
At once its hollow guile :
Told him that in a few short years,
The scales which sealed his eyes
Would fall, and let him view the world
Stripped of its false disguise ;
That he who barters all for love
Must be prepared to see
A manhood soured by goading cares,
An age of misery.

XLIX.

He hinted, distantly, 'tis true,
That it was scarcely wise
To rivet Hymen's fetters
Where Cupid's would suffice.
But here the indignant lover
Favoured the worldly peer
With something like a sermon,
Which merely raised a sneer,
Succeeded by an argument,
In which the ire parental
Glanced casually at certain facts
All bearing on the rent roll.

L.

This last threat only served to make
The matter ten times worse;
Finding persuasion useless,
The father had recourse
To his authority, and gave
His son to understand
That he must instantly prepare
To quit his native land,
And travel for a year or two.
The East he recommended,
As offering a tour to which
His own views always tended.

LI.

Stunned by this telling blow, the youth
At first made no reply,
While the stern father plumed himself
Upon his victory
Somewhat too early; for the youth,
In husky, choking voice,
Pleaded a right to what he termed
The privilege of choice;
And, goaded by his sire's cold sneer,
Vowed he would not consent
To what he could regard as nought
But downright banishment.

LII.

As water pent within a space
  Resents its narrow bounds,
And bursting with appalling noise
  The startled ear astounds;
Headlong the foaming torrent leaps,
  Uprooting in its path
Whatever may oppose its course;
  E'en such the father's wrath,
When he perceived that from that hour
  He could no more pretend
To order with a father's voice,
  Or counsel as a friend.

LIII.

No longer master of himself,
  His fury knew no bound,
His voice came from his quivering lips
  With a sharp, hissing sound.
With knitted brow and close-clenched teeth,
  And fire-flashing eye
(Each nerve seemed trembling 'neath the weight
  Of this indignity),
He glared with fury on his son,
  And in sarcastic tone,
Told him 'twixt wealth and beggary
  The choice would be his own.

LIV.

He swore with awful energy,
That never from that hour
Would he hold converse with a son
Who thus defied his power;
He sternly bade him recollect,
Ere yet it was too late,
That with his favour he would lose
Both fortune and estate;
That he had power over all
Except that useless toy,
An unsupported title,
Of which he wished him joy.

LV.

With bitter words and threatening brow
The father quits the place,
Leaving the astounded lover
To ponder on the case.
His proud heart swells when thinking o'er
The cruel threats and taunts
To which he has been subjected,
And now he wildly pants
To escape the galling thraldom
That holds him like a vice,
A prisoner to the creaking car
Of purblind prejudice.

LVI.

Needless to trace the struggle—
On one side haughty power,
While on the other youth and hope,
With beauty for a dower.
Which conquered ? Is it age that asks ?
Hast then forgot the day
When through thy veins love's fire chased
In all its lightning play ?
Which conquered ? cry those coral lips.
Fair angel ! canst thou ask ?
Traitress ! what risk would man not run
In thy soft smile to bask ?

LVII.

Which conquered ? Love ! earth spurning love !
Not that vile traitor who
Usurps his name, and oh ! too oft !
Assumes his semblance too.
Which conquered ? Could Love contemplate
An age of blank despair ;
Kindle the fire in the fane,
Nor place a vestal there ?
Never ! The youth who can do this
Must find some fitter name,
And not palm off his forgery
As Love's ethereal flame.

LVIII.

Love conquered, and a week's short space
Saw her a trembling bride,
While on his open brow was stamped
A lover's hopeful pride.
The father heard the news, and smiled,
But smiled as foeman may,
Who sees his enemy approach
In battle's proud array
The spot where some fell ambuscade
Renders retreat in vain,
And knows that soon those nodding plumes
Must sweep the ensanguined plain.

LIX.

So the stern Earl the future scans;
And, patient, waits the day
When, sated with possession,
His son will dearly pay
The price of disobedience.
He gloats with savage joy
When he contrasts the penitent
With the rash, self-willed boy,
And longs for that triumphant hour,
When, passion's fever o'er,
He may remind him of his choice,
And spurn him from his door.

LX.

In cheerless, solitary state,
He broods o'er hopes destroyed;
The dream of his declining years
Is faded, baseless, void.
Who shall decry his anger?
What though a brain-sick boy
May choose to barter all his hopes
For love's too short-lived joy;
Must age approve the shallow choice?
Must stern experience try
To unlearn the lessons of the past,
A life's philosophy?

LXI.

Was he not wrong, that cold, stern man?
Who says that he was not?
Was he not smarting from the sting
Of what he deemed a blot
On his escutcheon? More than this.
Hourly compelled to hear
Those kind condolences of friends
Which fall upon the ear
So like self-gratulation,
How doth the proud heart beat
When forced to accept the world's base coin
From every fool we meet!

LXII.

Heart-sick and disappointed,
Each object to his eye
Seems hateful, and in sheer disgust
He now resolves to try
Whether in travel's rapid whirl
He may not haply find
An antidote to his *ennui*—
A solace for the mind;
Whether by constant change of scene
He may not drive away
The memory of blasted hopes
That haunts him night and day.

LXIII.

In such a soul as his the thought
Was herald to the deed,
To things that pleaded for delay
He gave but little heed;
The duties of his large estate,
All worthless in his eyes
Since the transgression of his son,
A lawyer's care supplies.
For him the future's nothing,
The past a useless token,
The wine of life exhausted,
The crystal goblet broken.

LXIV.

He hies him from his island home,
  He sees its pale cliffs fade,
While Gallia's dark and frowning coast
  More clearly is displayed.
He lands 'twixt files of soldiers who,
  It can but be confessed,
Seem rather meant to watch a foe
  Than to receive a guest ;
He braves the *Douane's* harsh ordeal,
  And notes, with haughty scorn,
That to " Milor Anglais " its bolts
  Are instantly withdrawn.

LXV.

Paris receives the lordly guest,
  Paris the bright, the gay,
Where taste, in queenly state enshrined,
  Holds undisputed sway.
Fearing no rival, east and west
  Her laws unchallenged fly ;
Admiring Europe owns with smiles
  Her proud supremacy.
Rank, beauty, fortune, fashion
  All press around her throne,
Striving to glean her graces,
  And add them to their own.

LXVI.

But Paris and its gaieties
He views with jaundiced eye,
And quits fair France's capital
With many a smothered sigh.
He thinks of bygone times, when he
Had fluttered for a while
The cynosure of glancing eyes,
The aim of many a smile ;
Of days when youth could not believe
That pleasure's draught could be
Succeeded by the sickening void
Of palled satiety.

LXVII.

Seeking relief, now here, now there,
The outraged father flees ;
But to a mind diseased, alas !
Change brings but little ease.
What boots it to the broken heart
That nature's gayest smile
Welcomes the pilgrim of despair !
Though banished for a while,
Sorrow regains its mansion ;
We feel, with rising sigh,
That the bright gladness of the hour
But mocks our misery.

LXVIII.

By impulse or by hazard swayed,
Heedless the wanderer strays;
Now shivers under Russia's snows,
Now pants beneath the rays
That warm the south's more favoured soil,
And to its people lend
Those strange impulsive characters
Which through the land extend;
Fanned by enthusiasm's breath,
Impetuous, daring, brave,
Wanting its quickening influence,
A listless, soulless slave.

LXIX.

Now from the Switzer's Heaven-reared wall
He views the fertile plains
O'er which, by military sway,
The haughty Austrian reigns.
Yet, if the unalterable past
May haply aid us read
The hidden future, we may hope
To see Italia freed;
May trust that, at no distant day,
Her slavery will cease,
While she a resting place may find
With liberty and peace.

LXX.

O Liberty! thou word profaned!
Ne'er will thy smile be given
To noisy demagogues, by whom
Thy zone is rudely riven.
Too coy a maiden thou,
Thy godlike front to show
To men who rashly strive to tear
The veil from that pure brow.
Thy smallest favours must be stored
With more than miser's care,
Ere yet thy worshippers can hope
Thy confidence to share.

LXXI.

Why tremble, sons of Italy?
Why dread the tyrant's nod?
Remember that a nation's shout
Echoes the voice of God!
Link'd by the love of country,
Shake off your selfish fears!
See, through the gloom of slavery,
The ray of hope appears!
Win, step by step, the toilsome path,
Regard nor right nor left,
Till ye have gained the immortal prize
Of which ye are bereft.

LXXII.

In the great struggle to be free
Be patriotism your guide;
Attack that strong ally who now
Fights on the tyrant's side—
The giant bully, ignorance,
By whom he gains far more
Than by the sabre's flashing stroke,
Or culverin's loud roar.
Call to your aid the conquering mind,
And tyranny will be
Forced to succumb before the might
Of peaceful Liberty.

LXXIII.

But while the angry father roams,
How fares the truant son?
Tried by the touchstone, Time, does he
Repent of what is done?
Voyons un peu! You see that house?—
Not that huge stone affair;
Hofer, or Tell, or some one else,
Raised freedom's standard there;—
That cottage cover'd by a vine,
There, halfway down the hill,
That villa—not the term you say!
Well, *châlet*, if you will.

LXXIV.

Châlet, or villa, there it stands,
And there our wedded pair
Have seen three winters' breaths replaced
By spring's more genial air.
Nor is that all; for once within
The garden you will see
That though we left them only two,
Somehow we find them three.
Why round the lady's graceful neck
Those chubby arms entwine,
The gentle reader's sympathy
Par hazard may divine.

LXXV.

The wife's bright smile proclaims, methinks,
A bosom free from care,
Nor does the husband, on the whole,
Appear "the worse for wear."
More bronzed, a shade more thoughtful, yes,
But certainly improved;
Nor is the lady quite the sylph
She was when first he loved.
But place the gain against the loss,
And you will find the amount
Is more than balanced, when the child
Is "carried to account."

LXXVI.

That little casket doth contain
A jewel pure and bright,
A gem whose perfect loveliness
Is watched with fond delight.
Each day, each hour, the heaven-sent gift
Discloses some new trait,
As leaf by leaf the gentle bud
Expands to open day.
On that frail flower how much depends?
Oh, wondrous, mystic tie!
A father's heart, a mother's soul,
Within thy fastenings lie.

LXXVII.

How do they live? You're quite correct,
They do not live on air;
A rich old maiden aunt of his
Was privy to the affair.
A disappointment in her youth
Rendered her somewhat blind
To differences of station,
To love's heroics kind:
She feeds the hymeneal lamp,
So 'tis reported here,
And trusts to time to reconcile
The rebel and the peer.

LXXVIII.

Certain it is that once a year
The husband duly hies
From hence, and visits England's coast,
But whether the supplies
Depend on his migration
Is past my art to tell.
He regularly stops a month,
That I can vouch for well,
Because, while he is absent,
Myself and Mistress Bull
Do all we can in order that
The wife may not feel dull.

LXXIX.

'Twas pretty that same Swiss retreat;
Within those modest walls
More tranquil happiness was found
Than usually falls
To Hymen's votaries; but then,
The lady did not try
To hoist the banner of revolt,
Female supremacy.
Her gentle, loving, grateful heart
Desired no better task
Than to anticipate his wish
Ere he himself could ask.

LXXX.

Each to the other all in all,
Twin partners in the crime,
The way they bore their banishment
Was something quite sublime.
To see them scamper o'er the hills,
Or scale the mountain's side,
Or, floating in their tiny skiff,
Across the waters glide,
A stranger to their story
Had judged in half a minute,
Not that they wept their error,
But rather gloried in it.

LXXXI.

The homely Swiss, who saw them
Thus constantly together,
Conceived some curious notions
Regarding Hymen's tether
Amongst us bilious Britons;
Of one thing they were certain,
That, when o'er nuptial brows
Once fell the marriage curtain,
Each victim made a promise
To keep the fellow martyr
Within a distance measured
With the bride's wedding garter.

LXXXII.

To balance such strict tenure,
Should their affections alter,
The husband was at liberty,
Forthwith, to place a halter
Loosely around the fair one's neck,
Provided she were willing,
And thus accoutred sell her
By auction for a shilling.
His absence was regarded
As legal recreation,
A matrimonial license,
Or Benedict's vacation.

LXXXIII.

Some people hold it folly
To venture an opinion
On foreign countries until you
Have lived 'neath their dominion;
But at this bold assertion
Your humble servant cavils.
You think you know your own land,
But in your wide-world travels
You 'll hear, and that not seldom,
The boasted laws of Britain
Expounded in a fashion
You never would have hit on.

LXXXIV.

You grumble at the taxes,
But you will greatly wonder
How the Exchequer's ruler
Contrives to keep them under,
On hearing that he pampers
A host of foreign minions;
Maintains a local paper in
Each potentate's dominions;
Whose duty is to always keep
That country in hot water,
That *perfide Albion* may engross
The entire trade and barter.

LXXXV.

Strange countries should be seen,
Like mountains, from a distance;
For what, at first, seems adverse,
Grants in the end assistance;
As, near them, Turner's pictures
Are dabs of red and yellow,
Yet, further off, these colours
Harmoniously mellow,
And that which, scanned too closely,
Was colour'd hocus-pocus,
Becomes "A Hero's Triumph"
When view'd from a right focus.

LXXXVI.

But where's our hero? Really
This continental fashion
Of viewing things Britannic
Has put me in a passion;
Caused me to utter "treason"
'Gainst England's greatest artist;
Proved me, in taste's dominions,
A *dilletante* Chartist.
It's well I curbed my anger,
He's in the act of starting,
And now, with fond injunctions,
Gives the last kiss at parting.

LXXXVII.

How! the last kiss! don't worry!
The month once fairly over,
The husband will fly homeward
As quickly as a lover;
But his own serious face,
His little daughter's wonder,
Might lead an ignoramus
Into an awkward blunder.
These, with his wife's moist eyes,
Which 'tis scarce fair to mention,
I fear have caused the reader
A pang of apprehension.

LXXXVIII.

Now the *malle poste* relentless
Has borne away our hero,
The lady's spirits sinking
Down to a mental zero.
But one short month! no longer!
Yet that month always lingers,
As if old Time would hold it
For ever in his fingers.
Her husband there, the hours fly,
Like barb by rider goaded;
But in his absence creep along,
As doth an ass o'erloaded.

LXXXIX.

She wander'd through the lonesome house
With slow and listless pace,
But miss'd at every turn the form
Whose image filled the place.
His whip, his gun, all idle hung;
Nay, e'en his pipe was there;
It was the only vice he had;
Indeed 'tis hardly fair
To mention this last article,
But truth compels my pen
To state a fact which proves that he
Had faults like other men.

XC.

Wedlock had altogether failed
To wean him from this folly;
He would persist it banished
The demon Melancholy.
And by this artful statement
Enlisted in its favour
His wife, who (silly woman)
Declared she liked the flavour;
But you and I both know, ma'am,
That by this mean admission
She lost her only outpost
For future opposition.

XCI.

O favoured weed, whose worship
Can boast of names whose lustre
Dazzles your foes and dumbfounds
The pedant monarch's bluster!
Shall man reject a blessing
Which bounteous nature offers?
An argument sufficient
To silence paltry scoffers.
Dear, much-abused tobacco!
(Not that abuse will hurt you)
Accept a poet's tribute
To your consoling virtue.

XCII.

Had he but known you, grim Macbeth
Had spared his vain demand,
A "sweet oblivious antidote"
Was ready to his hand.
Misfortune's startling lineaments
Are softened by your aid,
Trouble's grim physiognomy
In a new light displayed;
Your presence banishes despair
And its attendant train;
You are a cordial to the heart,
A solace to the brain.

XCIII.

During the loved one's wanderings,
In her all-partial eyes,
Even an idle habitude
Assumed a pleasing guise.
How oft beside the crackling fire,
In confidential chat,
Armed with his pipe, in happiest mood,
For hours they had sat;
How many a day-dream they had shared,
Dreams from all sorrow free,
The circling vapour shutting out
Life's stern reality.

XCIV.

What with her household duties,
And memories of the past,
The first week of the dreaded month
Came to an end at last.
'Twas something truly to have cut
One portion from the four,
Although impatience brought to mind
That there were still three more.
When lo! this tedious sameness,
So dull and uninviting,
Was changed by an occurrence
As sudden as exciting.

XCV.

Following its tortuous course,
Until it reached the valley,
The mountain road, diverging,
Passed very near the *châlet.*
This route showed signs of traffic,
A thing by no means common,
The sound of wheels was heard,
And forthwith every woman
Rushed to the nearest casement,
With laudable intention
Of trying to enlarge
Her sphere of comprehension.

XCVI.

Enveloped in a cloud of dust,
A carriage was descried,
Quite at the mercy of two steeds,
Who all control defied.
Down the steep hill the startled brutes
Dashed on at furious rate,
Bearing a luckless *voyageur*
Resistless towards his fate ;
Till, unseen, or unheeded,
A chance obstruction shattered
The doomed *calèche*, and its contents
In wild confusion scattered.

XCVII.

The driver's rude displacement
Resulted in his falling
Into a quickset hedgerow ;
And though the fellow's bawling
Announced at least a fracture,
The brambles' intervention
Saved him from any damage,
At least that 's worth the mention ;
While on the open highway,
Which had been lately mended,
Pale, bleeding, and unconscious,
The traveller lay extended.

XCVIII.

There seemed at first no reason
  Why the "blind dame's" assistance
Merited thanks; but softly—
  At scarce a furlong's distance
The road approached a precipice,
  From whose o'erhanging summit,
Deeper than fathoms fifty,
  You might have dropped a plummet.
O'er this the horses bounded,
  Blinded by rage and terror,
And a dark, shapeless object
  Alone proclaimed their error.

XCIX.

Yet bad as was the accident,
  Its sequel showed that often
Philosophy in practice
  Life's greatest ills can soften.
'Tis a sad world, no doubt,
  Yet its worst phases show us,
Looked at through wisdom's optics,
  A deeper depth below us;
Though in this case the victim
  Could scarcely be expected
To give Fate thanks for being
  So suddenly ejected.

C.

All helpless lies the stranger,
While round him shrilly rises,
In various idiom uttered,
A legion of surmises.
Who he can be? where come from?
The universal question;
To which, with wondrous quickness,
Each offers a suggestion,
Until the mansion's mistress
Issues her verbal warrant
To bring the sufferer in,
Which stops the wordy torrent.

CI.

One neighbour proffers nostrums
Culled from the floral herbal;
This hastens to advise the mayor
To draw up *Procès verbal.*
Madame's own handmaid faints outright,
So much the sight has shocked her;
The busy gardener runs full speed
To fetch the village doctor;
The lady and her nurse,
Mid'st much expostulation,
First stanch the wound, and then attack
Suspended animation.

CII.

Hartshorn and sal-volatile
And all things efficacious
Are tried upon the patient,
But each turns out fallacious;
Although with Friars' balsam,
And rags in great profusion,
And that best thing, cold water,
They stop the blood's effusion
Till the arrival of the leech,
Who lint and rag displaces,
Then clears the room, and closes
The door in all their faces.

CIII.

At length the medico appeared,
With that important air
Which even doctors will assume
Where accidents are rare;
Parried a host of questions
With singular adroitness.
Wishing to render fully
The duties of politeness,
He sought the lady's presence,
And all the symptoms stated;
Though I suspect the danger
Was somewhat overrated.

CIV.

There was cerebral pressure,
The symptoms served to prove it;
But local applications,
He trusted, would remove it.
He could detect no fracture
In his examination,
But greatly dreaded the effects
Of nervous irritation;
Hinted how fortunate it was
That he had been selected,
As in less practised hands this fact
Might not have been detected.

CV.

Whether the doctor's remedies
Or nature's kindly powers
Deserve the credit I know not;
But after two long hours,
The sufferer awoke to pain,
And staring wildly round him,
Was in the act of speaking,
When his attendant bound him,
By sundry signs, to silence—
An order which the stranger
Wisely obeyed, not wishing
To aggravate his danger.

CVI.

Long time he lies as 'neath the spell
Of some oppressive dream,
So fitful, vague, and shadowy
Does every object seem.
Nature is too unhinged to note
The hours as they pass;
Half-coined impressions in the brain
Form a chaotic mass;
A ministering angel now
His craving thirst supplies,
Hovers a moment near his couch,
And all as quickly flies.

CVII.

And now the fever fiend is gone,
And the mad pulse's play
To a mere languid echo
Dies gradually away.
A soothing sense of comfort
Induces wholesome rest;
Calmed is the oppressive heaving
Which lately stirred his breast.
With slow and sullen step the foe
Withdraws him from the strife,
Watching each opportunity
To wrest the prize from Life.

CVIII.

The leech's wary tactics,
And a sound constitution,
Induced the "fatal sisters"
To change their resolution.
The patient mended daily,
Found his digestion quicken,
Discarded arrow-root for broth,
And that in turn for chicken.
And, just a fortnight from the day
That saw them all despairing,
The invalid was well enough
To take a carriage airing.

CIX.

But first he sought the "lady fair,"
And eloquently paid
His meed of heartfelt gratitude;
Owned that her timely aid
And generous care had saved a life
On which he set small store
(A deep sigh proved how true his words);
Still he should evermore
Feel that he owed the boon to her,
And hoped to see the day
When fate might place it in his power
Her kindness to repay.

CX.

His hostess, proud of her success,
Beguiled the vacant hours,
And to amuse his leisure
Exerted all her powers.
The views, the lake, the rapids,
Were each in turn inspected;
The "Horse's Leap" (lately so named)
Be sure was not neglected.
Here through the convalescent's frame
Shot something like a spasm,
As, with a dizzy brain, he strove
To pierce the yawning chasm.

CXI.

The morn was given to rambles,
The eve to conversation,
In which the guest made patent
His powers of narration.
He strove to amuse his hearer,
Nor vain was the endeavour;
His hostess smiled, or shuddered,
But interested ever,
Listened to his adventures
In desert, camp, and city,
Expressing admiration,
Astonishment, or pity.

CXII.

He spoke of climes where rarely
The traveller's footstep strays;
Where Central Asia's nomad race
No tyrant's will obeys.
Here he had shared the Tartar's tent,
And oft, in wayward mood,
Braved the grim monarch of the woods,
In this, his solitude.
The threatened danger loomed in vain,
Advice was thrown away,
He seemed to live but in the chase,
The tumult, or the fray.

CXIII.

The lady marvelled at his words,
But doubted not the tale;
So lifelike was the narrative,
That it could hardly fail
To force conviction on the mind,
E'en had the hearer been
An old and practised actor
In this world's changeful scene.
Oft to her lips the question rose,
Why in life's autumn he
Should find delight in scenes so fraught
With craft and cruelty?

CXIV.

But in his deeply-furrowed brow
And half-checked sigh she read,
That all which formed the charm of life
From him had long since fled;
And in her woman's heart she felt
That these pursuits could be
Nought but attempts to drown the sense
Of mental agony.
Had he outlived his happiness,
And felt himself alone,
Or had deception's poison turned
A once warm heart to stone?

CXV.

She knew not; but she pitied
That lone and sorrowing man,
And quite a drama of romance
Through her rich fancy ran.
But just as woman's colouring
Had sketched his former life,
The postman's boisterous summons
Recalled the anxious wife.
She seized the missive long looked for,
Glanced once at the direction,
Then hurried off to indulge
The dictates of affection.

CXVI.

She tore it open quickly,
That you will doubtless credit,
But won't believe she kissed it
E'en oftener than she read it.
Then, conscious of her rudeness,
She hastily descended,
Fearing her guest might feel himself
Or slighted or offended ;
And to excuse her *brusquerie*,
And little show of sorrow,
Announced that she expected
Her husband on the morrow.

CXVII.

The morrow came, and various signs
Threatened a busy day,
The guest,—who dreaded nought so much
As being in the way,—
Provided with a book, withdrew
Into a shady bower,
Where, in his convalescence, he
Had spent many an hour.
Here he could plan his movements,
For with returning vigour
The wish to hurry onward
Seized him with tenfold rigour.

CXVIII.

He would but thank the husband
For all the wife's attention,
And judge if he were worthy her;
Though here his apprehension
Suggested some misgivings,
For female prizes often
Fall to the share of blockheads,
And but too rarely soften
A heart that's worth the winning;
Perhaps 'tis nature's plan
To mix the evil with the good
In all that touches man.

CXIX.

But while the impatient guest
His future schemes thinks over,
With beating heart the wife awaits
The advent of the rover.
Her longing eyes at length are blest—
The vehicle draws nearer;
The features of its occupant
Become, each moment, clearer.
'Tis he, 'tis he! oh, happiness!
A truce to love's alarms,
Another moment, and the wife
Is folded in his arms.

CXX.

Now comes the exchange of news—
The history of the stranger,
The accident, his piteous plight,
His illness, and his danger ;
His look, his age, his bearing,
His manners, and his nation ;
Her own ideas, moreover,
As to his social station.
Here, to her great surprise,
Her mem'ry gives her warning
That her guest has not proffered
The greetings of the morning.

CXXI.

The husband, hearing where he is,
Hospitably proposes,
In laughing mood, to visit
This "love among the roses."
The wife, who was at all times
Proud of her partner's graces,
The task of introduction
Most readily embraces.
Her kind heart breathes a prayer
That her joy may not darken
The guest's lone state, and make him
To thoughts despondent hearken.

CXXII.

The child, with all an infant's glee,
Delighted, leads the way,
Determined to astonish him
With the superb display
Of all her late-acquired stores.
Great friends they were, these two;
Many the strolls which they had shared,
And gambols not a few;
And oft, when no inducement else
Could cheat the child to rest,
Close nestling to that cold, stern man,
She slept upon his breast.

CXXIII.

Soon at the entrance of the bower
The happy couple stand;
The ardent youth, with manly air,
Frankly extends his hand.
But scarcely has the lady named
Her "husband," ere she sees
A sight that pales her damask cheek,
And seems her blood to freeze.
The guest, now haughty and erect,
Fire darting from his eyes,
Glares on his new-found host, who stands
The image of surprise.

Alarmed, she turns to him she loves,
But, to her great amaze,
An innate sense of conscious guilt
His pallid cheek betrays.

CXXIV.

Short time endured this scene most strange,
Yet long enough to show
That she had succoured one who held
Her husband as a foe.
Shocked at the thought, with close-locked hands,
And eyes dissolved in tears,
She would have sunk upon the earth
O'erpowered by her fears,
But that the guest, all tenderly,
Received her in his arms,
Then pressed his lips to that pale brow,
Now damp with love's alarms,
Resigned that fainting burthen,
As loath with it to part,
And clasped the wonder-stricken child
With phrenzy to his heart.

CXXV.

One glance at that fair infant face
His anger served to tame ;
One single word broke from his lips,
That word, a simple name.

His outstretched hands forgiveness spoke ;
"Father," the youth replied,
And knelt him at his father's feet,
Forgotten all his pride.
He heard that well-known voice express
Deep gratitude to Heaven,
And rose, his only grief removed,
His single fault forgiven.

CXXVI.

That hour plucked from an aching heart
The canker of despair,
Relieved it from the venomed brood
That long had 'gendered there.
Those ties, which late seemed torn apart,
Contract with tenfold force ;
Love drives fell hatred from its seat,
And banishes remorse.
The clouds of anger are dispelled,
Affection's genial ray
Invites the bosom's buried germs
To bloom in open day.

CXXVII.

The lady, smiling through her tears,
Clings to her husband's breast,
The joy, too big for utterance,
In her soft eyes expressed.

For though she had, within her heart,
Confined the secret pain,
Oft, with the blush of conscious worth,
She thought of the disdain
She had excited ; better she
Had listened to her pride,
Flung the much-envied honour back,
And, blessing him, have died !

CXXVIII.

Thus had she communed with herself
And oh ! the joy to know
That she to his best interests
No longer was a foe.
Now would her husband take his place
Amid the noble throng,
Emerge from that obscurity
Which clothed his name too long ;
Shine 'midst the brightest—he, her own,
Her treasure, her adored ;
To all that he had lost for her
So happily restored.

CXXIX.

Thus passed a week, a happy week ;
And now they quit the scene
With grateful hearts and moistened eyes ;
For like an island green

In memory's waste that spot remained;
To each it told a tale
Of that pure joy so seldom known
In life's unquiet vale.
The sire longed impatiently
To instal the wedded pair,
And in affection's circle
To claim a father's share.

CXXX.

Again on English soil they stand;
Each bosom feels the glow
Of satisfaction, while content
Is stamped on every brow.
The softened father feels no more
The sting of wounded pride;
The son, with happiness elate,
Walks proudly by his side;
The wife, her heart too full for words,
Yet radiant with her joy,
Feels (this sole cloud of care blown o'er)
A bliss without alloy.

CXXXI.

They reach the busy capital,
But care not now to move
In fashion's vortex; sweeter far
The birthplace of their love—

The scene where every object
Hints to the teeming brain
Their passion's past emotions,
Its pleasure and its pain.
The father gives a glad assent,
As, with a blushing grace,
The wife elects the "Ancestral Hall"
Her chosen dwelling place.

CXXXII.

Long had that noble mansion worn
The livery of neglect,
Nor could the closest scrutiny
A sign of life detect.
The long lines of its windows dark,
Its jealous portals shut,
Its terrace, foul with cankering moss,
Marked by no human foot,
Its walks, obscured by tangled weeds,
Its face so blank and cold,—
A history of abandonment
That dull exterior told.

CXXXIII.

Changed is its aspect; yet, once more,
It wears a joyous air;
All who can claim the privilege
In crowds are flocking there.

Carriage and horseman throng the drivè,
On the same errand bent,
To welcome back the wanderers
With smile and compliment.
From their dull sleep, long undisturbed,
The echoes wake again,
And make their soft responses heard
Throughout the wide domain.

CXXXIV.

His late-found daughter by his side,
The peer, with courtly grace,
Receives the host of visitors
Who occupy the place.
To each he makes the lady known,
And, with delight elate,
Marks the sensation which such charms
Are certain to create.
The men all vote her perfect,
The softer sex proclaim
Her face and figure well enough,
But think her somewhat tame.

CXXXV.

Pass we some months; 'tis early spring,
A fresh and sunny morn,
The dewdrops glisten on the grass
Which clothes the spacious lawn;

The neighbouring spire is musical
With joyous peal and loud.
Again long lines of carriages
The mansion's portals crowd;
But this time sunburnt peasants,
And village matrons, too,
Are flocking to the stately hall,
All with one end in view.

CXXXVI.

What clothes each face with wreathing smiles?
Can the same impulse move
The rustic and the titled dame,
The eagle and the dove?
Render the proud one affable?
Banish the sulky scowl
With which the poor regard the rich?
Reduce to its control
Such warring elements as these?
Yet, to the gazer's eye,
One sentiment pervades the breast
Of every passer by.

CXXXVII.

Yes, there is one which all must feel;
'Tis when the light of day
Upon the new-born infant sheds
Its doubly welcome ray;

When the delighted mother's ear
First hears that plaintive cry;
When the long-cherished dream gives place
To sweet reality.
Nature asserts her magic power,
Or high or low the lot,
It flourishes to Time's full end,
Life's freshest, brightest spot.

CXXXVIII.

A son is born! A son, an heir!
Then forth the tidings go,
And all for many miles around
The joyful advent know.
'Tis this that brings the smiling throng,
For this the bells resound;
'Tis this that sends the circling cup
In quick succession round.
What gratulations, wishes, vows!
All tongues, from peer to nurse,
The welcome stranger's attributes
Unceasingly rehearse.

CXXXIX.

Here's to the heir's good health! Huzza!
May he, through life's short span,
Approve himself, in the best sense,
Truly a noble man.

May he regard as nought the chance
Which cast his lot so high;
May he upon the world look round
With philosophic eye;
Feel that high station is a trust,
Wealth but "the talent" lent,
To be the stay of virtue's cause,
Not vice's instrument.

CXL.

So ends my strain. Present and past
Are in the poet's power;
But closed to reader and to bard
The future's mystic hour.
Though in rude verse my tale be sung,
In simple language dressed,
Yet may its moral haply find
An echo in each breast.
Could this be so, how pure a joy
Would this torn bosom swell,
And cheat of half its mournfulness
That last sad word, FAREWELL.

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